BURNET'S
THEORY
OF THE
EARTH.

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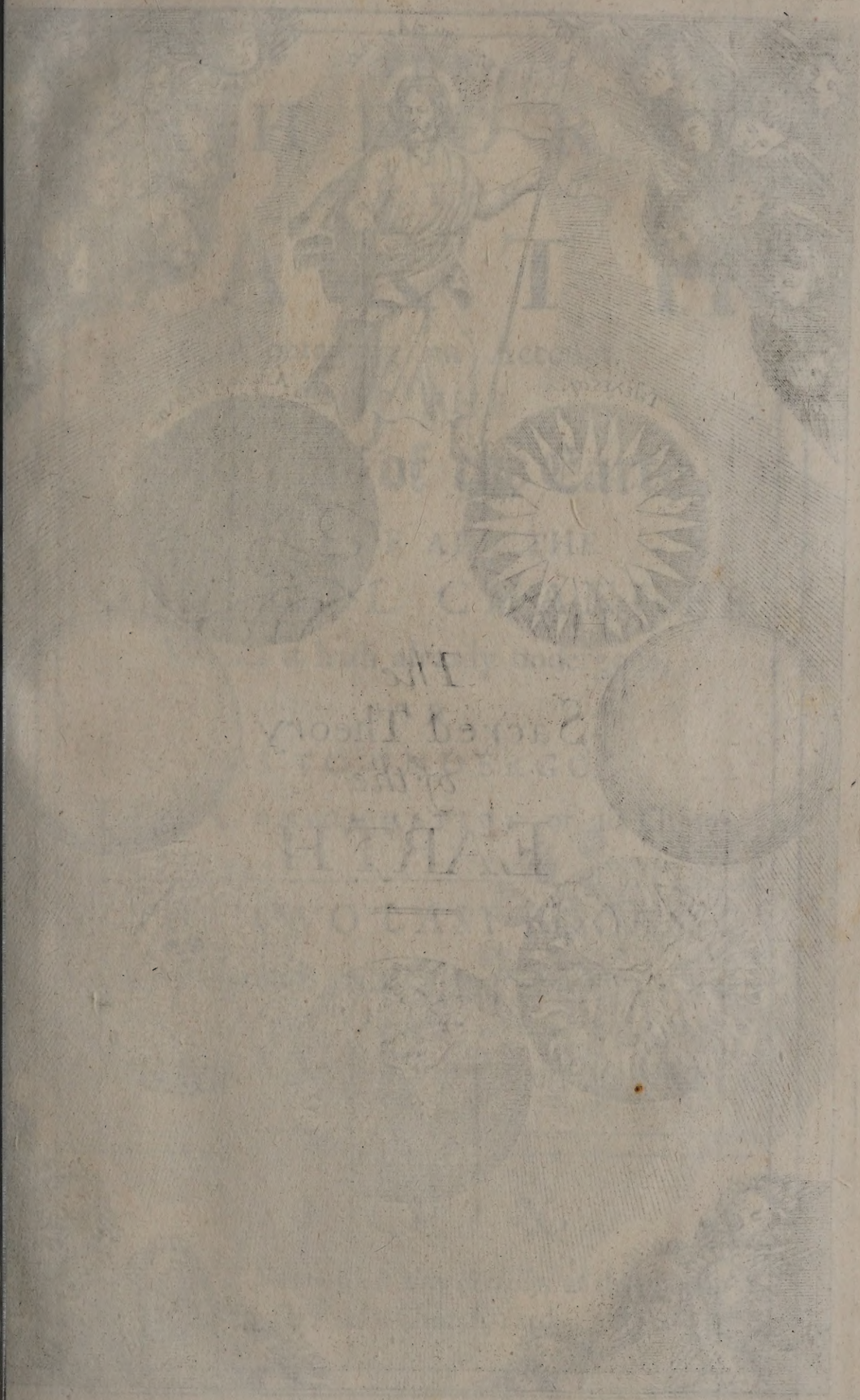

The Sacred Theory *of the* EARTH.

THE

THEORY

OF THE

EARTH:

Containing an Account

OF THE

Original of the Earth,

AND OF ALL THE

GENERAL CHANGES

Which it hath already undergone,

OR

IS TO UNDERGO,

Till the CONSUMMATION of all Things.

THE TWO LAST BOOKS,

Concerning the BURNING *of the* WORLD,

AND

Concerning the NEW HEAVENS and NEW EARTH.

LONDON,

Printed by *R. Norton*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's Head in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1690.

TO THE

QUEEN'S MOST Excellent Majesty.

MADAM,

HAVING had the honour to present the first part of this Theory to Your ROYAL UNCLE, I presume to offer the Second to Your Majesty. This part of the Subject, I hope, will be no less acceptable, for certainly 'tis of no less importance. They both indeed agree in this, That there is a WORLD made and destroy'd in either Treatise. But we are more concern'd in what is to come, than in what is past. And as the former Books represented to us the Rise and Fall of the First World; so These give an account of the present Frame of Nature labouring under the last Flames, and of the Resurrection of it in the New Heavens and New Earth: which, according to the Divine Promises, we are to expect.

Cities that are burnt, are commonly rebuilt more beautiful and regular than they were before. And when this World is demolish'd by the last Fire, He that undertakes to rear it up again,

will

will ſupply the defects, if there were any, of the former Fabrick. This Theory ſuppoſes the preſent Earth to be little better than an Heap of Ruines: where yet there is room enough for Sea and Land, for Iſlands and Continents, for ſeveral Countries and Dominions: But when theſe are all melted down, and refin'd in the general Fire, they will be caſt into a better mould, and the Form and Qualities of the Earth will become Paradiſiacal.

But, I fear, it may be thought no very proper addreſs, to ſhew Your Majeſty a World laid in aſhes, where You have ſo great an intereſt Your Self, and ſuch fair Dominions; and then, to recompence the loſs by giving a Reverſion in a Future Earth. But if that future Earth be a ſecond Paradiſe, to be enjoyed for a Thouſand Years; with Peace, Innocency, and conſtant health: An Inheritance there will be an happy exchange for the beſt Crown in this World.

I confeſs, I could never perſwade my ſelf, that the Kingdom of Chriſt and of his Saints, which the Scripture ſpeaks of ſo frequently, was deſign'd to be upon this preſent Earth. But however, upon all ſuppoſitions, They that have done ſome eminent Good in this Life, will be ſharers in the happineſs of that State. To humble the Oppreſſors, and reſcue the Oppreſſed, is a work of Generoſity and Charity that cannot want its reward; Yet, MADAM, *They are the greateſt Benefactors to Mankind, that diſpoſe the World to become Vertuous: and by their example, Influence, and Authority, retrieve that* TRUTH *and* JUSTICE, *that have been loſt, amongſt men, for many Ages. The School-*

Divines

Divines tell us, Those that act or suffer great things for the Publick Good, are distinguish'd in Heaven by a Circle of Gold about their Heads. One would not willingly vouch for that: but one may safely for what the Prophet says, which is far greater: namely, that They shall shine like Stars in the Firmament, that turn many to Righteousness. *Which is not to be understood, so much, of the Conversion of single Souls, as of the turning of Nations and People, The turning of the World to Righteousness. They that lead on that great and happy Work, shall be distinguish'd in Glory from the rest of Mankind.*

We are sensible, MADAM, *from Your Great Example, that Piety and Vertue seated upon a Throne, draw many to imitation, whom ill Principles, or the course of the World, might have led another way. These are the best, as well as easiest Victories, that are gain'd without Contest. And as Princes are the Vicegerents of God upon Earth, so when their Majesty is in Conjunction with Goodness, it hath a double Character of Divinity upon it: and we owe them a double Tribute, of Fear and Love. Which, with constant Prayers for Your* MAJESTY'S *present and future Happiness, shall be always Dutifully paid, by*

Your MAJESTY'S

Most Humble and most

Obedient Subject,

T. BURNET.

PREFACE
TO THE
READER.

I HAVE not much to say to the Reader in this Preface to the Third Part of the Theory: seeing it treats upon a Subject own'd by all, and out of dispute: *The Conflagration of the World.* The question will be only about the bounds and limits of the Conflagration, the Causes and the Manner of it. These I have fix'd according to the truest measures I could take from Scripture, and from Nature. I differ, I believe, from the common Sentiment in this, that, in following S. *Peter*'s Philosophy, I suppose, that the burning of the Earth will be a true Liquefaction or dissolution of it, as to the exteriour Region. And that this lays a foundation for *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*; which seems to me as plain a doctrine in Christian Religion, as the Conflagration it self.

I have endeavour'd to propose an intelligible way, whereby the Earth may be consum'd by Fire. But if any one can propose another, more probable and more consistent, I will be the first man that shall give him thanks for his discovery. He that loves Truth for its own sake, is willing to receive it from any hand: as he that truly loves his Country, is glad of a Victory over the Enemy, whether himself, or any other, has the glory of it. I need not repeat here, what I have already said upon several occasions, That 'tis the substance of this Theory, whether in this part or in other parts, that I mainly regard and depend upon. Being willing to suppose that many single

a explica-

explications and particularities may be rectified, upon further thoughts and clearer light. I know our beſt writings, in this life, are but *Eſſays*, which we leave to Poſterity to review and correct.

As to the Style, I always endeavour to expreſs my ſelf, in a plain and perſpicuous manner: that the Reader may not loſe time, nor wait too long, to know my meaning. To give an Attendant quick diſpatch, is a civility, whether you do his buſineſs or no. I would not willingly give any one the trouble of reading a period twice over, to know the ſence of it: leſt when he comes to know it, he ſhould not think it a recompence for his pains. Whereas, on the contrary, if you are eaſie to your Reader, he will certainly make you an allowance for it, in his cenſure.

You muſt not think it ſtrange however, that the Author ſometimes, in meditating upon this ſubject, is warm in his thoughts and expreſſions. For to ſee a World periſhing in Flames, Rocks melting, the Earth trembling, and an Hoſt of Angels in the clouds, one muſt be very much a Stoick, to be a cold and unconcerned Spectator of all this. And when we are mov'd our ſelves, our words will have a tincture of thoſe paſſions which we feel. Beſides, in moral reflections which are deſigned for uſe, there muſt be ſome heat, as well as dry reaſon, to inſpire this cold clod of clay, this dull body of earth, which we carry about with us; and you muſt ſoften and pierce that cruſt, before you can come at the Soul. But eſpecially when things future are to be repreſented, you cannot uſe too ſtrong Colours, if you would give them life, and make them appear preſent to the mind. Farewel.

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THE THEORY OF THE EARTH.

Book III.

Concerning the Conflagration.

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THE INTRODUCTION,

With the Contents and Order of this Work.

SEEING Providence hath planted in all Men a natural desire and curiosity of knowing things to come; and such things especially as concern our particular Happiness, or the general Fate of mankind: This Treatise may, in both respects, hope for a favourable reception amongst inquisitive persons; seeing the design of it is, to give an account of the greatest revolutions of Nature that are expected in future Ages: and in the first place, of the *Conflagration of the World.* In which Universal Calamity, when all Nature suffers, every man's particular concern must needs be involv'd.

We see with what eagerness men pry into the Stars, to see if they can read there the Death of a King, or the fall of an Empire: 'Tis not the fate of any single Prince or Potentate, that we Calculate, but of all Minkind:

Nor of this or that particular Kingdom or Empire, but of the whole Earth. Our enquiries muſt reach to that great period of Nature, when all things are to be diſſolv'd: both humane affairs, and the Stage whereon they are acted. When the Heavens and the Earth will paſs away, and the Elements melt with fervent heat. We deſire, if poſſible, to know what will be the face of that Day, that great and terrible Day, when the Regions of the Air will be nothing but mingled Flame and Smoak, and the habitable Earth turn'd into a Sea of molten Fire.

But we muſt not leave the World in this diſorder and confuſion, without examining what will be the Iſſue and Conſequences of it. Whether this will be the End of all things, and Nature, by a ſad fate, lie eternally diſſolv'd and deſolate in this manner: or whether we may hope for a Reſtauration: *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*, which the Holy Writings make mention of, more pure and perfect than the former. As if this was but as a *Refiner's fire*, to purge out the droſs and courſer parts, and then caſt the Maſs again into a new and better Mould. Theſe things, with God's aſſiſtance, ſhall be matter of our preſent enquiry; Theſe make the general ſubject of this Treatiſe, and of the remaining parts of this *Theory* of the Earth. Which now, you ſee, begins to be a kind of Prophecy, or Prognoſtication of things to come: as it hath been hitherto an Hiſtory of things paſs'd; of ſuch ſtates and changes as Nature hath already undergone. And if that account which we have given of the Origine of the Earth, its firſt and Paradiſiacal form, and the diſſolution of it at the univerſal Deluge, appear fair and reaſonable: The Second diſſolution by Fire, and the renovation of it out of a ſecond Chaos, I hope will be deduc'd from as clear grounds and ſuppoſitions. And Scripture it ſelf will be a more viſible Guide to us in theſe following parts of the Theory, than it was in the former. In the mean time, I take occaſion to declare here again, as I have done heretofore, that neither this, nor any other great revolutions of Nature, are brought to paſs, by cauſes purely natural, without the conduct of a particular

ticular Providence. And 'tis the Sacred Books of Scripture that are the records of this Providence, both as to times paſt, and times to come: as to all the ſignal Changes either of the Natural World, or of Mankind, and the different Oeconomies of Religion. In which reſpects, theſe Books, tho' they did not contain a Moral Law, would notwithſtanding be, as the moſt myſtical, ſo alſo the moſt valuable Books in the World.

This Treatiſe, you ſee, will conſiſt of Two Parts: The former whereof is to give an account of the *Conflagration*; and the latter, of the *New Heavens* and *New Earth* following upon it; together with the ſtate of Mankind in thoſe new Habitations. As to the Conflagration, we firſt enquire, what the Antients thought concerning the preſent frame of this World; whether it was to periſh or no: whether to be deſtroyed, or to ſtand eternally in this poſture. Then in what manner they thought it would be deſtroy'd; by what force or violence; whether by Fire or other ways. And with theſe opinions of the Antients we will compare the doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles, to diſcover and confirm the truth of them. In the Second place, We will examine what Calculations or Conjectures have been made concerning the time of this great Cataſtophe, or of the end of this World. Whether that period be defineable or no: and whether by natural Arguments, or by Prophecies. Thirdly, We will conſider the Signs of the approaching Conflagration: Whether ſuch as will be in Nature, or in the State of humane Affairs; but eſpecially ſuch as are taken notice of and recorded in Scripture. Fourthly, which is the principal point, and yet that wherein the Antients have been moſt ſilent, *What Cauſes* there are in Nature, what preparations, for this Conflagration: Where are the Seeds of this univerſal Fire, or fewel ſufficient for the nouriſhing of it? Laſtly, in what order and by what degrees the Conflagration will proceed: In what manner the frame of the Earth will be diſſolv'd: and what will be the dreadful countenance of a *Burning World.*

Theſe heads are ſet down more fully in the Arguments of each Chapter; and ſeem to be ſufficient for the explication of this whole matter: Taking in ſome additional diſcourſes, which, in purſuing theſe heads, enter of their own accord, and make the work more even and intire. In the ſecond Part, we reſtore the World that we had deſtroy'd: Build new Heavens and a new Earth, *wherein Righteouſneſs ſhall dwell.* Eſtabliſh that new order of things, which is ſo often celebrated by the Prophets: A Kingdom of Peace and of Juſtice, where the Enemy of Mankind ſhall be bound, and the Prince of Peace ſhall rule. A Paradiſe without a Serpent, and a Tree of Knowledge, not to wound, but to heal the Nations. Where will be neither *curſe*, nor *pain*, nor *death*, nor *diſeaſe*. Where all things are new, all things are more perfect: both the World it ſelf, and its Inhabitants. Where the Firſt-born from the Dead, have the Firſt-fruits of glory.

We dote upon this preſent World, and the enjoyments of it: and 'tis not without pain, and fear, and reluctancy, that we are torn from them: as if our hopes lay all within the compaſs of this life. Yet, I know not by what good fate, my thoughts have been always fixt upon things to come, more than upon things preſent. Theſe I know, by certain experience, to be but trifles; and if there be nothing more conſiderable to come, the whole Being of Man is no better than a trifle. But there is room enough before us in that we call *Eternity*, for great and noble Scenes: and the mind of Man feels it ſelf leſſen'd and ſtraiten'd in this low and narrow ſtate: wiſhes and waits to ſee ſomething greater. And if it could diſcern another World a coming, on this ſide eternal life; a beginning Glory, the beſt that Earth can bear, It wou'd be a kind of Immortality to enjoy that proſpect before-hand; To ſee, when this Theater is diſſolv'd, where we ſhall act next, and what parts. What Saints and Hero's, if I may ſo ſay, will appear upon that Stage; and with what luſter and excellency. How eaſie would it be, under a view of theſe futurities, to deſpiſe the little pomps and honours, and the momentany pleaſures of a mortal life. But I proceed to our Subject.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The true ſtate of the Queſtion is propos'd.

'Tis the general doctrine of the Ancients, that the preſent World, or the preſent frame of Nature, is mutable and periſhable: To which the Sacred Books agree: and natural reaſon can alledge nothing againſt it.

WHen we ſpeak of the End or deſtruction of the World, whether by Fire or otherwiſe, 'Tis not to be imagin'd that we underſtand this of the *Great Univerſe*; Sun, Moon, and Stars, and the higheſt Heavens: as if theſe were to periſh or be deſtroy'd, ſome few years hence, whether by Fire or any other way. This Queſtion is only to be underſtood of the *Sublunary World*, of this Earth and its Furniture; which had its original about ſix thouſand years ago, according to the Hiſtory of *Moſes*; and hath once already been deſtroy'd, when the exteriour region of it broke, and the Abyſs iſſuing forth, as out of a womb, overflow'd all the habitable Earth. The next Deluge is that of Fire; which will have the ſame bounds, and overflow the Surface of the Earth much-what in the ſame manner. But the celeſtial Regions, where the Stars and Angels inhabit, are not concern'd in this fate: Thoſe are not made of combuſtible matter, nor, if they were, cou'd our flames reach them. Poſſibly thoſe Bodies may have changes and revolutions peculiar to themſelves, but in ways unknown to us, and after long and unknown periods of time. Therefore when we ſpeak of the Conflagration of the World, Theſe have no concern in the queſtion; nor any other part of the Univerſe, than the Earth and its dependances. As will evidently appear when we come to explain the manner and cauſes of the Conflagration.

Gen. 7. 11. *Job* 38. 8.

And

And as this Conflagration can extend no further than to the Earth and its Elements, ſo neither can it deſtroy the matter of the Earth; but onely the form and faſhion of it, as it is an habitable World. Neither Fire, nor any other natural Agent can deſtroy Matter, that is, reduce it to nothing: It may alter the modes and qualities of it, but the ſubſtance will always remain. And accordingly the Apoſtle, when he ſpeaks of the mutability of this World, ſays onely, *The figure* or faſhion of *this World paſſes away.* This ſtructure of the Earth and diſpoſition of the Elements: And all the *works* of the Earth, as St. *Peter* ſays; All its natural productions, and all the works of art or humane induſtry; theſe will periſh, melted or torn in pieces by the Fire; but without an annihilation of the Matter, any more than in the former Deluge. And this will be further prov'd and illuſtrated in the beginning of the following Book.

1 *Cor.* 7. 31.

2 *Epiſt.* 3.

The queſtion being thus ſtated, we are next to conſider the ſenſe of Antiquity upon theſe two Points: Firſt, whether this Sublunary World is mutable and periſhable. Secondly, by the force and action of what cauſes, and in what manner it will periſh: whether by Fire or otherwiſe. *Ariſtotle* is very irregular in his Sentiments about the ſtate of the World; He allows it neither beginning nor ending, riſe nor fall, but wou'd have it eternal and immutable. And this he underſtands not onely of the great Univerſe, but of this Sublunary World, this Earth which we inhabit: wherein he will not admit there ever have been or ever will be, either general Deluges or Conflagrations. And as if he was ambitious to be thought ſingular in his opinion about the eternity of the World, He ſays, *All* the *Ancients* before him, gave ſome begining or origine to the World: but were not indeed ſo unanimous as to its future fate: Some believing it immutable, or as the Philoſophers call it, incorruptible; Others, that it had its fatal times and periods, as leſſer Bodies have; and a term of age prefixt to it, by Providence.

But before we examine this Point any further, it will be neceſſary to reflect upon that which we noted before,

fore, an ambiguity in the uſe of the word *World*, which gives frequent occaſion of miſtakes in reading the Ancients: when that which they ſpeak of the *great Univerſe*, we apply to the *Sublunary World*: or on the contrary, what they ſpeak of this Earth, we extend to the whole Univerſe. And if ſome of them, beſides *Ariſtotle*, made the World incorruptible, they might mean that of the *great Univerſe*, which they thought would never be diſſolv'd or periſh as to its Maſs and bulk; But ſingle parts and points of it (and our Earth is no more) may be variouſly transform'd, and made habitable and unhabitable, according to certain periods of time, without any prejudice to their Philoſophy. So *Plato*, for inſtance, thinks this World will have no Diſſolution: for, being a work ſo beautiful and noble, the goodneſs of God, he ſays, will always preſerve it. It is moſt reaſonable to underſtand this of the Great Univerſe; for, in our Earth, *Plato* himſelf admits ſuch diſſolutions, as are made by general Deluges and Conflagrations; and we contend for no other. So likewiſe in other Authors, if they ſpeak of the immortality of the World, you muſt obſerve what world they apply it to; and whether to the matter or the form of it: and if you remember that our Diſcourſe proceeds onely upon the Sublunary World, and the diſſolution of its form, you will find little in antiquity contrary to this doctrine. I always except *Ariſtotle*, (who allow'd of no Providence in this inferiour World) and ſome *Pythagoreans* falſly ſo call'd, that were Apoſtates from the doctrine of their Maſter. Theſe being excepted, upon a view of the reſt, you will find very few diſſenters from this general doctrine.

Plato's argument againſt the diſſolution of the world, from the goodneſs and wiſdom of God, wou'd not be altogether unreaſonable, tho' apply'd to this Earth, if it was ſo to be diſſolv'd, as never to be reſtor'd again. But we expect *new Heavens* and a *new Earth* upon the diſſolution of theſe: better in all reſpects, more commodious and more beautiful. And the ſeveral perfections of the divine nature, wiſdom, power, goodneſs, juſtice, ſanctity, cannot be ſo well diſplay'd and exemplifi'd in any one ſingle ſtate of Nature, as in

in a ſucceſſion of States: fitted to receive one another according to the diſpoſitions of the Moral World, and the order of Divine Providence. Wherefore *Plato*'s argument from the Divine Attributes, all things conſider'd, doth rather prove a ſucceſſion of Worlds, than that one ſingle world ſhould remain the ſame throughout all ages, without change or variation. Next to the *Platoniſts*, the *Stoicks* were moſt conſiderable in matters relating to Morality and Providence: And their opinion, in this caſe, is well known; they being lookt upon by the Moderns, as the principal authors of the doctrine of the *Conflagration.* Nor is it leſs known that the School of *Democritus* and *Epicurus* made all their worlds ſubject to diſſolution; and by a new concourſe of Atomes reſtor'd them again. Laſtly, The *Ionick* Philoſophers, who had *Thales* for their Maſter, and were the firſt Naturaliſts amongſt the *Greeks*, taught the ſame doctrine. We have indeed but an imperfect account left us of this Sect, and 'tis great pity; for as it was one of the moſt ancient, ſo it ſeems to have been one of the moſt conſiderable amongſt the *Greeks* for Natural Philoſophy. In thoſe remains which *Diogenes Laertius* hath preſerv'd, of *Anaxagoras*, *Anaximenes*, *Archelaus*, &c. All great men in their time, we find that they treated much of the Origine of the world, and had many extraordinary Notions about it, which come lame and defective to us. The doctrine of their founder, *Thales*, which made all things to conſiſt of Water, ſeems to have a great reſemblance to the doctrine of *Moſes* and S. *Peter*, about the conſtitution of the firſt Heavens and Earth. But there is little in *Laertius* what their opinion was about the Diſſolution of the world. Other Authors inform us more of that. *Stobæus* joyns them with *Leucippus* and the *Epicureans*: *Simplicius* with *Heraclitus* and the *Stoicks*, in this doctrine about the corruptibility of the World. So that all the Schools of the Greek Philoſophers, as we noted before, were unanimous in this point, excepting the *Peripateticks*; whoſe Maſter, *Ariſtotle*, had neither modeſty enough to follow the doctrine of his Predeceſſors, not wit enough to invent any thing better. Beſides

Gen. 1.
2 *Pet.* 2. 5.

Ecl. Phyſ.
l. 1. *c.* 24.

Beſides theſe Sects of Philoſophers, there were Theologers amongſt the Greeks, more antient than theſe Sects, and more myſtical. *Ariſtotle* often diſtinguiſheth the *Naturaliſts* and the *Theologues*. Such were *Orpheus* and his followers, who had more of the antient Oriental Learning than the ſucceeding Philoſophers. But they writ their Philoſophy, or Theology rather, Mythologically and Poetically, in Parables and Allegories, that needed an interpretation. All theſe Theologers ſuppoſed the Earth to riſe from a Chaos: and as they ſaid that *Love* was the principle at firſt, that united the looſe and ſevered Elements, and formed them into an habitable World: So they ſuppoſed that if *Strife* or *Contention* prevail'd, that would again diſſolve and diſunite them, and reduce things into a Chaos: Such as the Earth will be in, upon the Conflagration. And it further appears, that both theſe Orders of the Learned in *Greece* ſuppos'd this preſent frame of Nature might periſh, by their doctrine of *Periodical Revolutions*, or of the Renovation of the World after certain periods of time: which was a doctrine common amongſt the learned *Greeks*, and received by them from the ancient Barbarick Nations. As will appear more at large in the following Book. In the mean time we may obſerve that *Origen* in anſwering *Celſus*, about the point of the Reſurrection, tells him, that Doctrine ought not to appear ſo ſtrange or ridiculous to him, ſeeing their own Authors did believe and teach the *Renovation of the World*, after certain Ages or periods. And the truth is, this Renovation of the World, rightly ſtated, is the ſame thing with the *firſt Reſurrection* of the Chriſtians. And as to the ſecond and general Reſurrection, when the Righteous ſhall have Celeſtial bodies; 'tis well known that the *Platoniſts* and *Pythagoreans* cloath'd the Soul with a Celeſtial body, or, in their Language, an Ethereal Vehicle, as her laſt Beatitude or Glorification. So that *Origen* might very juſtly tell his adverſary, he had no reaſon to ridicule the Chriſtian doctrine of the Reſurrection, ſeeing their own Authors had the main ſtrokes of it in their Traditionary Learning.

οἱ φυσικοὶ, οἱ θεόλογοι.

Ch. 3. li. 5.

I will only add one remark more, before we leave this Subject, to prevent a miſtake in the word *Immortal* or *Immortality*, when applyed to the World. As I told you before, the equivocation that was in that term *World*, it being us'd ſometimes for the whole Univerſe, ſometimes for this inferiour part of it where we live; ſo likewiſe we muſt obſerve, that when this inferiour World is ſaid to be *immortal*, by the Philoſophers, as ſometimes it is, that commonly is not meant of any ſingle ſtate of Nature, or any ſingle World, but of a ſucceſſion of Worlds, conſequent one upon another. As a family may be ſaid immortal, not in any ſingle perſon, but in a ſucceſſion of Heirs. So as, many times, when the Ancients mention the immortality of the World, they do not thereby exclude the Diſſolution or Renovation of it: but ſuppoſe a viciſſitude, or ſeries of Worlds ſucceeding one another. This obſervation is not mine, but was long ſince made by *Simplicius*, *Stobæus*, and others, who tell us in what ſenſe ſome of thoſe Philoſophers who allowed the World to be periſhable, did yet affirm it to be immortal: namely, by ſucceſſive renovations.

Thus much is ſufficient to ſhew the ſence and judgment of Antiquity, as to the changeableneſs or perpetuity of the World. But ancient learning is like ancient Medals, more eſteemed for their rarity, than their real uſe; unleſs the Authority of a Prince make them currant. So neither will theſe teſtimonies be of any great effect, unleſs they be made good and valuable by the Authority of Scripture. We muſt therefore add the Teſtimonies of the Prophets and Apoſtles to theſe of the Greeks and Barbarians, that the evidence may be full and undeniable. That the Heavens and the Earth will periſh or be chang'd into another form, is, ſometimes, plainly expreſt, ſometimes ſuppoſed and alluded to in Scripture. The Prophet *David*'s teſtimony is expreſs, both for the beginning and ending of the World: in the 102. *Pſalm*, *Of old haſt thou laid the foundation of the Earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure: yea, all of them ſhall wax old*

Ver. 25, 26, 27.

old like a garment; as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed. But thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall have no end. The Prophet *Eſay*'s teſtimony is no leſs expreſs, to the ſame purpoſe. *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the Earth beneath: for the heavens ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and the Earth ſhall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein ſhall die in like manner.* Theſe Texts are plain and explicite; And in alluſion to this day of the Lord, and this deſtruction of the World, the ſame Prophet often uſeth phraſes that relate to it. As the *Concuſſion of the Heavens and the Earth.* The *ſhaking of the foundations of the World.* The *diſſolution of the Hoſt of Heaven.* And other Sacred Writers have expreſſions of the like force, and relating to the ſame effect. As the *Hills melting like wax, at the preſence of the Lord:* Pſal. 97. 5. Shattering *once more* all the parts of the Creation: *Hagg.* 2. 6. *Overturning the mountains, and making the pillars of the Earth to tremble:* Job 9. 5, 6. If you reflect upon the explication given of the Deluge in the firſt part of this Theory, and attend to the manner of the Conflagration, as it will be explain'd in the ſequel of this Diſcourſe, you will ſee the juſtneſs and fitneſs of theſe expreſſions: That they are not poëtical hyperboles, or random expreſſions, of great and terrible things in general, but a true account of what hath been, or will be, at that great day of the Lord. 'Tis true, the Prophets ſometimes uſe ſuch-like expreſſions figuratively, for commotions in States and Kingdoms, but that is onely by way of metaphor and accommodation; the true baſis they ſtand upon, is that ruine, overthrow, and diſſolution of the natural World, which was once at the Deluge, and will be again, after another manner, at the general Conflagration.

Ca. 51. 6.

Iſa. 13. 13. c. 24. 18, 19. c. 34. 4.

As to the new Teſtament, our Saviour ſays, *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but his words ſhall not paſs away:* Matt. 24. 35. St. *Paul* ſays, the *Scheme of this world*; the faſhion, form, and compoſition of it, *paſſeth away*: 1 Cor. 7. 31. And when mention is made of *new Heavens* and a *new Earth*, which both the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and the Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and St. *John*, mention, 'tis plainly imply'd that the old ones will be diſſolv'd.

Iſa. 65. 17. & 66. 22. *Rev.* 21. 1. 2 *Pet.* 3. 13.

diſſolv'd. The ſame thing is alſo imply'd, when our Saviour ſpeaks of a *Renaſcency* or *Regeneration*: Matt. 19. 28. and St. *Peter*, of a *Reſtitution* of all things: *Act.* 3. 21. For what is now, muſt be aboliſh'd, before any former order of things can be reſtor'd or reduc'd. In a word, If there was nothing in Scripture concerning this ſubject, but that diſcourſe of St. *Peter*'s, in his 2*d.* Epiſtle and 3*d.* Chapter, concerning the triple order and ſucceſſion of the Heavens and the Earth; paſt, preſent, and to come; that alone would be a conviction and demonſtration to me, that this preſent World will be diſſolv'd.

You will ſay, it may be, in the laſt place, we want ſtill the teſtimony of natural reaſon and Philoſophy to make the evidence compleat. I anſwer, 'tis enough if They be ſilent, and have nothing to ſay to the contrary. Here are witneſſes, humane and divine, and if none appear againſt them, we have no reaſon to refuſe their teſtimony, or to diſtruſt it. Philoſophy will very readily yield to this doctrine, that All material compoſitions are diſſolvable: and ſhe will not wonder to ſee that die, which ſhe had ſeen born; I mean, this Terreſtrial World. She ſtood upon the Chaos, and ſee it rowl it ſelf, with difficulty and after many ſtrugglings, into the form of an habitable Earth: And that form ſhe ſee broken down again at the Deluge; and can as little hope or expect now, as then, that it ſhould be everlaſting and immutable. There would be nothing great or conſiderable in this inferiour World, if there were not ſuch revolutions of nature. The Seaſons of the Year, and the freſh Productions of the Spring, are pretty in their way; But when the *Great Year* comes about, with a new order of all things, in the Heavens and on the Earth; and a new dreſs of nature throughout all her regions, far more goodly and beautiful than the faireſt Spring; This gives a new life to the Creation, and ſhows the greatneſs of its Author. Beſides, Theſe Fatal Cataſtrophes are always a puniſhment to degenerate Mankind, that are overwhelm'd in the ruines of theſe periſhing Worlds. And to make nature her ſelf execute the divine vengeance againſt rebellious Creatures, argues both the

Annus Magnus.

power

power and wiſdom of that Providence that governs all things here below. Theſe things Reaſon and Philoſophy approve of; but if you further require that they ſhould ſhew a *Neceſſity* of this future deſtruction of the World, from *Natural Cauſes*, with the time and all other circumſtances of this effect; your demands are unreaſonable, ſeeing theſe things do not depend ſolely upon Nature. But if you will content your ſelf to know what diſpoſitions there are in Nature towards ſuch a change, how it may begin, proceed, and be conſummate, under the conduct of Providence, be pleaſed to read the following Diſcourſe for your further ſatisfaction.

CHAP. III.

That the World will be deſtroy'd by Fire, is the doctrine of the Ancients, eſpecially of the Stoicks. *That the ſame doctrine is more ancient than the* Greeks, *and deriv'd from the Barbarick Philoſophy, and That probably from* Noah; *the Father of all Traditionary Learning. The ſame doctrine expreſly authoriz'd by Revelation, and inroll'd into the Sacred Canon.*

THAT the preſent World, or the preſent frame of Nature, will be deſtroy'd, we have already ſhewn. In what manner this deſtruction will be, by what force or what kind of fate, muſt be our next enquiry. The Philoſophers have always ſpoken of *Fire* and *Water*, thoſe two unruly Elements, as the only Cauſes that can deſtroy the World, and work our ruine; And accordingly they ſay, all the great and fatal Revolutions of Nature, either paſt or to come, depend upon the violence of theſe Two; when they get the maſtery, and overwhelm all the reſt and

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the whole Earth, in a Deluge or Conflagration. But as they make these Two the Destroying Elements, so they also make them the Purifying Elements. And accordingly in their Lustrations, or their rites and ceremonies for purging sin, Fire and Water were chiefly made use of, both amongst the *Romans*, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*. And when these Elements over-run the world, it is not, they say, for a final destruction of it, but to purge Mankind and Nature from their Impurities. As for purgation by Fire and Water, the stile of our Sacred Writings does very much accommodate it self to that sence; and the Holy Ghost, who is the great Purifier of Souls, is compared in his operation upon us, and in our regeneration, to fire or water. And as for the external world, S. *Peter* makes the Flood to have been a kind of *Baptising* or renovation of the world. And S. *Paul* and the Prophet *Malachy* make the last Fire, to be a purging and refining fire. But to return to the Ancients.

1 *Ep.* 3. 21.

1 *Cor.* 3. 13.

Mal. 3. 2, 3.

The *Stoicks* especially, of all other Sects amongst the *Greeks*, have preserved the doctrine of the Conflagration, and made it a considerable part of their Philosophy, and almost a character of their order. This is a thing so well known that I need not use any Citations to prove it. But they cannot pretend to have been the first authors of it neither. For, besides that amongst the *Greeks* themselves, *Heraclitus* and *Empedocles*, more ancient than *Zeno*, the Master of the *Stoicks*, taught this doctrine, 'tis plainly a branch of the Barbarick Philosophy, and taken from thence by the *Greeks*. For it is well known that the most ancient and mystick learning amongst the *Greeks*, was not originally their own, but borrowed of the more Eastern Nations, by *Orpheus*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and many more: who travel'd thither, and traded with the Priests for knowledge and Philosophy; and when they got a competent stock, returned home, and set up a School, or a Sect, to instruct their Country-men. But before we pass to the Eastern nations, let us, if you please, compare the *Roman* Philosophy upon this subject, with that of the *Greeks*.

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The *Romans* were a great people, that made a ſhew of Learning, but had little in reality, more than words and Rhetorick. Their curioſity or emulation in Philoſophical Studies was ſo little, that it did not make different Sects and Schools amongſt them, as amongſt the *Greeks*. I remember no Philoſophers they had but ſuch as *Tully*, *Seneca*, and ſome of their Poets. And of theſe *Lucretius*, *Lucan* and *Ovid*, have ſpoken openly of the Conflagration. *Ovid's* Verſes are well known,

Eſſe quoque in fatis reminiſcitur, affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo Tellus, correptaque Regia Cœli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operoſa laboret.

A Time decreed by Fate, at length will come,
When Heavens and Earth and Seas ſhall have their doom;
A fiery doom: And Nature's mighty frame
Shall break, and be diſſolv'd into a flame.

We ſee *Tully's* ſence upon this matter in *Scipio's Dream*. When the old man ſpeaks to his Nephew *Africanus*, and ſhews him from the clouds, this ſpot of Earth, where we live; He tells him, tho' our actions ſhou'd be great, and fortune favour them with ſucceſs, yet there wou'd be no room for any laſting glory in this World; for the World it ſelf is tranſient and fugitive. And a Deluge or a Conflagration, which neceſſarily happen after certain periods of time, ſweep away all records of humane actions. As for *Seneca*, he being a profeſt *Stoick*, we need not doubt of his opinion in this point. We may add here, if you pleaſe, the *Sibylline verſes*, which were kept with great Religion, in the Capitol at *Rome*, and conſulted with much ceremony upon ſolemn occaſions. Theſe *Sibyls* were the Propheteſſes of the *Gentiles*, and tho' their writings now have many ſpurious additions, yet none doubt but that the Conflagration of the World was one of their original Prophecies.

Let us now proceed to the Eaſtern nations. As the *Romans* receiv'd the ſmall skill they had in the Sciences, from the *Greeks*; ſo the *Greeks* receiv'd their chief myſtick

myſtick learning from the *Barbarians*: that is, from the *Ægyptians*, *Perſians*, *Phœnicians*, and other Eaſtern Nations: For 'tis not onely the Weſtern or Northern people, that they call'd *Barbarians*, but indeed all Nations beſides themſelves. For that is commonly the vanity of great Empires, to uncivilize in a manner all the reſt of the World; and to account all thoſe People *Barbarous*, that are not ſubject to their dominion. Theſe however, whom they call'd ſo, were the moſt ancient People, and had the firſt learning that was ever heard of after the Flood. And amongſt theſe, the *Ægyptians* were as famous as any: whoſe Sentiment in this particular of the Conflagration is well known. For *Plato*, who liv'd amongſt them ſeveral years, tells us in his *Timæus*, that it was the doctrine of their Prieſts, that the fatal Cataſtrophes of the World were by *Fire* and *Water*. In like manner the *Perſians* made their beloved God, *Fire*, at length to conſume all things that are capable of being conſum'd. For that is ſaid to have been the doctrine of *Hydaſpes*, one of their great *Magi* or Wiſe men. As to the *Phœnicians*, I ſuſpect very much that the Stoicks had their Philoſophy from them, and amongſt other things the Conflagration. We ſhall take notice of that hereafter.

Juſt. Mar. Apol. 2.

But to comprehend the *Arabians* alſo, and *Indians*, give me leave to reflect a little upon the ſtory of the *Phœnix*. A ſtory well known, and related by ſome ancient Authors, and is in ſhort this. The *Phœnix*, they ſay, is a Bird in *Arabia*, *India*, and thoſe Eaſtern parts, ſingle in her kind, never more than one at a time, and very long-liv'd: appearing onely at the expiration of the *Great Year*, as they call it: And then ſhe makes her ſelf a Neſt of Spices, which being ſet on fire by the Sun, or ſome other ſecret power, ſhe hovers upon it, and conſumes her ſelf in the flames. But, which is moſt wonderful, out of theſe aſhes riſeth a ſecond *Phœnix*; ſo that it is not ſo much a death as a renovation. I do not doubt but the ſtory is a fable, as to any ſuch kind of Bird, ſingle in her ſpecies, living and dying, and reviving in that manner: But 'tis an Apologue, or a Fable with an interpretation, and was intended as an Emblem of the World: which,

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after a long age, will be conſum'd in the laſt fire: and from its aſhes or remains will ariſe another world, or a new-form'd Heavens and Earth. This, I think, is the true myſtery of the *Phœnix*, under which Symbol the Eaſtern Nations preſerv'd the doctrine of the Conflagration and renovation of the World. They tell ſomewhat a like ſtory of the Eagle, ſoaring a-loft ſo near the Sun, that by his warmth and enlivening rays, ſhe renews her age and becomes young again. To this the *Pſalmiſt* is thought to allude: Pſal. 103. 5. *Thy Youth ſhall be renew'd like the Eagles*: which the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt renders, *In mundo venturo renovabis, ſicut Aquilæ, juventutem tuam.* Theſe things to me ſeem plainly to be ſymbolical, repreſenting that World to come, which the Paraphraſt mentions, and the fireing of this. And this is after the manner of the Eaſtern Wiſdom; which always lov'd to go fine, cloath'd in figures and fancies.

And not onely the Eaſtern *Barbarians*, but the Northern and Weſtern alſo, had this doctrine of the Conflagration amongſt them. The *Scythians*, in their diſpute with the *Ægyptians* about antiquity, argue upon both ſuppoſitions, of Fire or Water, deſtroying the laſt World, or beginning this. And in the Weſt, the *Celts*, the moſt ancient People there, had the ſame tradition; for the *Druids*, who were their Prieſts and Philoſophers, deriv'd, not from the *Greeks*, but of the old race of Wiſe men, that had their Learning traditionally, and, as it were, hereditary from the firſt ages: Theſe, as *Strabo* tells us, gave the World a kind of immortality by repeated renovations; and the principle that deſtroy'd it, according to them, was always Fire or Water. I had forgot to mention in this Liſt, the *Chaldeans:* whoſe opinion we have from *Beroſus* in *Seneca.* They did not onely teach the Conflagration, but alſo fixt it to a certain period of time, when there ſhould happen a great Conjunction of the Planets in *Cancer.* Laſtly, we may add, to cloſe the account, the Modern *Indian* Philoſophers, the reliques of the old *Bragmans*; Theſe, as *Maffeus* tells us, declare, that the World will be renew'd, after an Univerſal Conflagration.

l. 4.

Nat. Quæſt. 3. *c.* 29.

l. 16. *Hiſt. Ind.*

You ſee of what extent and univerſality throughout all Nations, this doctrine of the Conflagration hath been. Let us now conſider what defects or exceſſes there are, in theſe ancient opinions, concerning this fate of the World, and how they may be rectified: That we may admit them no further into our belief, than they are warranted by reaſon, or by the authority of Chriſtian Religion. The firſt fault they ſeem to have commited about this point, is this, That they made theſe revolutions and renovations of nature, indefinite or endleſs: as if there would be ſuch a ſucceſſion of Deluges and Conflagrations to all eternity. This, the *Stoicks* ſeem plainly to have aſſerted, as appears from *Eumenius*, *Philo*, *Simplicius*, and Others. *Epiſt.* 60. St. *Jerome* imputes this Opinion alſo to *Origen*: but he does not always hit the true ſence of that Father, or is not fair and juſt in the repreſentation of it. Whoſoever held this Opinion, 'tis a manifeſt errour, and may be eaſily rectified by the Chriſtian Revelation; which teaches us plainly, that there is a final period and conſummation of all things that belong to this Sublunary or Terreſtrial world. When the *Kingdom ſhall be deliver'd up to the Father*: and Time ſhall be no more.

Another Errour they committed in this doctrine, is, the Identity, or ſameneſs, if I may ſo ſay, of the worlds, ſucceeding one another. They are made indeed of the ſame Lump of matter, but they ſuppos'd them to return alſo in the ſame Form. And, which is worſe, that there would be the ſame face of humane affairs; The ſame Perſons and the ſame actions over again; So as the ſecond World would be but a bare repetition of the former, without any variety or diverſity. Such a revolution is commonly call'd the *Platonick Year*: A period, when all things return to the ſame poſture they had ſome thouſands of years before; As a Play acted over again, upon the ſame Stage, and to the ſame Auditory. This is a groundleſs and injudicious ſuppoſition. For, whether we conſider the nature of things; The Earth after a diſſolution, by Fire or by Water, could not return into the ſame form and faſhion it had before; Or whether we conſider Provi-

Providence, it would no ways ſuit with the Divine Wiſdom and Juſtice to bring upon the ſtage again thoſe very Scenes, and that very courſe of humane affairs, which it had ſo lately condemn'd and deſtroy'd. We may be aſſured therefore, that, upon the diſſolution of a World, a new order of things, both as to Nature and Providence, always appears: And what that new order will be, in both reſpects, after the *Conflagration*, I hope we ſhall, in the following Book, give a ſatisfactory account.

Theſe are the opinions, true or falſe, of the Ancients; and chiefly of the *Stoicks*, concerning the myſtery of the Conflagration. It will not be improper to enquire in the laſt place, how the *Stoicks* came by this doctrine: whether it was their diſcovery and invention, or from whom they learned it. That it was not their own invention, we have given ſufficient ground to believe, by ſhewing the antiquity of it beyond the times of the *Stoicks*. Beſides, what a man invents himſelf, he can give the reaſons and cauſes of it, as things upon which he founded his invention: But the *Stoicks* do not this, but according to the ancient traditional way, deliver the concluſion without proof or premiſſes. We nam'd *Heraclitus* and *Empedocles* amongſt the *Greeks* to have taught this doctrine before the *Stoicks*: And, according to *Plutarch*, *Heſiod* and *Orpheus*, authors of the higheſt antiquity, ſung of this laſt Fire, in their Philoſophick Poetry. But I ſuſpect the *Stoicks* had this doctrine from the *Phœnicians*; for if we enquire into the original of that Sect, we ſhall find that their Founder *Zeno*, was a Barbarian or Semi-barbarian, deriv'd from the *Phœnicians*, as *Laertius* and *Cicero* give an account of him. And the *Phœnicians* had a great ſhare in the Oriental knowledge, as we ſee by *Sanchoniathon*'s remains in *Euſebius*. And by their myſtical Books which *Suidas* mentions, from whence *Pherecydes*, *Pythagoras* his Maſter, had his learning. We may therefore reaſonably preſume that it might be from his Countrey-men, the *Phœnicians*, that *Zeno* had the doctrine of the *Conflagration*. Not that he brought it firſt into *Greece*, but ſtrongly reviv'd it, and made it almoſt peculiar to his Sect.

De defec. Orac.

So much for the *Stoicks* in particular, and the *Greeks* in general. We have alſo, you ſee, trac'd theſe Opinions higher, to the firſt Barbarick Philoſophers: who were the firſt race of Philoſophers after the Flood. But *Joſephus* tells a formal ſtory of Pillars ſet up by *Seth*, before the Flood; implying the foreknowledge of this Fiery deſtruction of the World, even from the beginning of it. His words are to this effect, give what credit to them you think fit. *Seth and his fellow ſtudents having found out the knowledge of the cæleſtial Bodies, and the order and diſpoſition of the Univerſe; and having alſo receiv'd from* Adam *a Prophecy, that the World ſhould have a double deſtruction, one by Water, another by Fire; To preſerve and tranſmit their knowledge, in either caſe, to poſterity, They raiſed two Pillars, one of Brick, another of Stone, and ingrav'd upon them their Philoſophy and inventions. And one of theſe pillars,* the Author ſays, *was ſtanding in* Syria, *even to his time.* I do not preſs the belief of this ſtory; there being nothing, that I know of, in Antiquity Sacred or prophane, that gives a joint teſtimony with it. And thoſe that ſet up theſe Pillars, do not ſeem to me to have underſtood the nature of the Deluge or *Conflagration*; if they thought a Pillar, either of Brick or Stone, would be ſecure, in thoſe great diſſolutions of the Earth. But we have purſued this doctrine high enough without the help of theſe antediluvian Antiquities: namely, to the earlieſt people and the firſt appearances of Wiſdom after the Flood. So that, I think, we may juſtly look upon it as the doctrine of *Noah*, and of his immediate poſterity. And as that is the higheſt ſource of learning to the preſent World; ſo we ſhould endeavour to carry our Philoſophical Traditions to that Original: for I cannot perſwade my ſelf but that they had amongſt them, even in thoſe early days, the main ſtrokes or concluſions of the beſt Philoſophy: or, if I may ſo ſay, a form of ſound doctrine concerning Nature and Providence. Of which matter, if you will allow me a ſhort digreſſion, I will ſpeak my thoughts in a few words.

l. 1. *c.* 3.

κατὰ τὴν Συριάδα.

In

In thoſe firſt Ages of the World after the Flood, when *Noah* and his Children peopled the Earth again, as he gave them Precepts of morality and piety for the conduct of their manners: which are uſually call'd *Præcepta Noachidarum*, the *Precepts* of *Noah*, frequently mention'd both by the Jews and Chriſtians: So alſo he deliver'd to them, at leaſt, if we judge aright, certain Maximes or Concluſions about Providence, the ſtate of Nature, and the fate of the World: And theſe, in proportion, may be call'd *Dogmata Noachidarum*, the *Doctrines* of *Noah*, and *his Children*. Which made a Syſteme of Philoſophy or ſecret knowledge amongſt them, deliver'd by Tradition from Father to Son; but eſpecially preſerv'd amongſt their Prieſts and Sacred Perſons, or ſuch others as were addicted to Contemplation. This I take to be more ancient than *Moſes* himſelf, or the *Jewiſh* Nation. But it would lead me too far out of my way, to ſet down in this place, the reaſons of my judgment. Let it be ſufficient to have pointed onely at this Fountain-head of knowledge, and ſo return to our Argument.

We have heard, as it were, a Cry of Fire, throughout all Antiquity, and throughout all the People of the Earth. But thoſe alarums are ſometimes falſe, or make a greater noiſe than the thing deſerves. For my part, I never truſt Antiquity barely upon its own account, but always require a ſecond witneſs, either from Nature, or from Scripture: What the voice of Nature is, we ſhall hear all along in the following Treatiſe: Let us then examine at preſent, what teſtimony the Prophets and Apoſtles give to this ancient doctrine of the Conflagration of the World. The Prophets ſee the World a-fire at a diſtance and more imperfectly, as a brightneſs in the Heavens, rather than a burning flame: but St. *Peter* deſcribes it, as if he had been ſtanding by, and ſeen the Heavens and Earth in a red fire: heard the cracking flames and the tumbling Mountains: 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. In the day of the Lord, *The Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat: The Earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.* Then, after a pious Ejaculation, he adds, Ver. 12. *Looking*

for

for and haſtening the coming of the day of God, wherein the Heavens, being on fire, ſhall be diſſolved; and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat. This is as lively, as a Man could expreſs it, if he had the dreadful ſpectacle before his Eyes. St. *Peter* had before taught the ſame doctrine (*ver.* 5, 6, 7.) but in a more Philoſophick way; deſcribing the double fate of the World, by water and fire, with relation to the Nature and Conſtitution of either World, paſt or preſent. *The Heavens and the Earth were of old, conſiſting of water and by water: whereby, the World that then was, being overflow'd with water, periſhed. But the Heavens and the Earth which are now, by the ſame Word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly, or Atheiſtical men.* This teſtimony of St. *Peter* being full, direct, and explicit, will give light and ſtrength to ſeveral other paſſages of Scripture, where the ſame thing is expreſt obſcurely or by alluſion. As when St. *Paul* ſays, *The fire ſhall try every mans work in that day.* And our Saviour ſays, *The tares ſhall be burnt in the fire, at the end of the World.* Accordingly it is ſaid, both by the Apoſtles and Prophets, that *God* will come to judgment *in Fire.* St. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*, promiſeth the perſecuted Righteous, reſt and eaſe, *When the Lord ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire: taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c.* And ſo to the *Hebrews*, St. *Paul* ſays, that for wilful Apoſtates there remaineth no more Sacrifice for ſin, *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries*, or enemies of God. And in the 12*th.* Chapter, he alludes to the ſame thing, when after he had ſpoken of *ſhakeing the Heavens* and the *Earth* once more, he exhorteth, as St. *Peter* does upon the ſame occaſion, to *reverence and godly fear, For our God is a conſuming Fire.*

1 *Cor.* 3. 12, 13.

Mat. 13. 40, 41, 42.

2 *Theſſ.* 2. 7, 8.

ch. 10. 27.

Ver. 26, 27, 28, 29.

In like manner the Prophets, when they ſpeak of deſtroying the wicked, and the Enemies of God and Chriſt, at the end of the world, repreſent it as a deſtruction *by Fire.* Pſalm the 11*th.* 6. *Upon the wicked the Lord ſhall rain coals, fire, and brimſtone, and a burning tempeſt: This ſhall be the portion of their Cup.* And Pſal. 50. 3. *Our God ſhall come, and will not be ſlow: A fire*

fire ſhall devour before him, and it *ſhall be very tempeſtuous round about him.* And in the beginning of thoſe two triumphal Pſalms, the ſixty-eight, and ninety-ſeventh, we ſee plain alluſions to this coming of the Lord in fire. The other Prophets ſpeak in the ſame ſtyle, Of a fiery indignation againſt the wicked, in the day of the Lord: As in *Iſaiah* 66. 15. *For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his Chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.* And in *Daniel*, (c. 7. 9, 10.) The Ancient of days is plac'd upon his Seat of Judgment, cover'd in flames. *I beheld till the Thrones were ſet, and the Ancient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: His Throne was like the fiery flame, his wheels as burning fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued and came forth from before him: Thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him: The judgment was ſet, and the Books were opened.* The Prophet *Malachy* (c. 4. 1.) deſcribes the Day of the Lord to the ſame effect, and in like colours; *Behold the Day cometh, that ſhall burn as an Oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly ſhall be as ſtubble; and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch.* And that nature her ſelf, and the Earth ſhall ſuffer in that fire, the Prophet *Zephany* tells us, (c. 3. 8.) *All the Earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of my jealouſie.* Laſtly, this conſumption of the Earth by fire; even to the foundations of it, is expreſt livelily by *Moſes* in his Song, *Deut.* 32. 22. *A fire is kindled in my anger, and ſhall burn unto the loweſt Hell: and ſhall conſume the Earth with her increaſe, and ſet on fire the foundations of the Mountains.* and ch. 34. 8, 9, 10.

If we reflect upon theſe Witneſſes; and eſpecially the firſt and laſt, *Moſes* and St. *Peter:* at what a great diſtance of time they writ their Prophecies, and yet how well they agree, we muſt needs conclude that they were acted by the ſame Spirit: and a Spirit that ſee thorough all the Ages of the World, from the beginning to the end. Theſe Sacred Writers were ſo far diſtant in time from one another, that they could not confer together, nor conſpire, either in a falſe teſtimony,

mony, or to make the ſame prediction. But being under one common influence and inſpiration, which is always conſiſtent with it ſelf, they have dictated the ſame things, tho' at two thouſand years diſtance ſometimes from one another. This beſides many other conſiderations, makes their authority inconteſtable. And upon the whole account, you ſee, that the doctrine of the future *Conflagration of the World*, having run through all Ages and Nations, is, by the joynt conſent of the Prophets and Apoſtles, adopted into the Chriſtian Faith.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the time of the Conflagration, and the end of the World. What the Aſtronomers ſay upon this Subject, and upon what they ground their Calculations; The true notion of the Great Year, or of the Platonick Year, ſtated and explained.

HAVING, in this firſt Section, laid a ſure foundation as to the Subject of our Diſcourſe; the truth and certainty of the *Conflagration* whereof we are to treat; we will now proceed to enquire after the *Time*, *Cauſes*, and *Manner* of it. We are naturally more inquiſitive after the end of the World, and the time of that fatal revolution, than after the cauſes of it: for theſe, we know, are irreſiſtible, whenſoever they come, and therefore we are only ſollicitous that they ſhould not overtake us, or our near poſterity. The *Romans* thought they had the fates of their Empire in the Books of the Sibyls, which were kept by the Magiſtrates as a Sacred Treaſure. We have alſo our Prophetical Books, more ſacred and more infallible than theirs, which contain the fate of all the

the Kingdoms of the Earth, and of that glorious Kingdom that is to ſucceed. And of all futurities, there is none can be of ſuch importance to be enquired after, as this laſt ſcene and cloſe of all humane affairs.

If I thought it poſſible to determine the time of the *Conflagration* from the bare intuition of Natural Cauſes, I would not treat of it in this place, but reſerve it to the laſt; after we had brought into view all thoſe Cauſes, weigh'd their force, and examin'd how and when they would concur to produce this great effect. But I am ſatisfied that the excitation and concurſe of thoſe Cauſes does not depend upon Nature only; and tho' the Cauſes may be ſufficient when all united, yet the union of them at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a manner, I look upon as the effect of a particular Providence: and therefore no foreſight of ours, or inſpection into Nature can diſcover to us the time of this conjuncture. This method therefore of Prediction from Natural Cauſes being laid aſide as impracticable, all other methods may be treated of in this place, as being independent upon any thing that is to follow in the Treatiſe; and it will be an eaſe to the Argument to diſcharge it of this part, and clear the way by degrees to the principal point, which is, the *Cauſes* and *Manner* of the Conflagration.

Some have thought it a kind of impiety in a Chriſtian to enquire after the end of the World; becauſe of that check which our Saviour gave his Diſciples, when, after his Reſurrection, enquiring of him about the time of his Kingdom, He anſwer'd, *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* Act. 1. 7. And, before his death, when he was diſcourſing of the Conſummation of all things, He told them expreſly, that tho' there ſhould be ſuch and ſuch previous Signs as he had mentioned, yet, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man. No, not the Angels that are in Heaven, but my Father only.* Mat. 24. 36. Be it ſo, that the Diſciples deſerv'd a reprimand, for deſiring to know, by a particular revelation from our Saviour, the ſtate of future times; when many other

things were more neceſſary for their inſtruction, and for their miniſtery. Be it alſo admitted, that the Angels, at that diſtance of time, could not ſee thorow all events to the end of the World; it does not at all follow from thence that they do not know it now; when, in the courſe of Sixteen hundred years, many things are come to paſs, that may be marks and directions to them to make a judgment of what remains, and of the laſt period of all things. However there will be no danger in our enquiries about this matter, ſeeing they are not ſo much to diſcover the certainty, as the uncertainty of that period, as to humane knowledge. Let us therefore conſider what methods have been uſed, by thoſe that have been curious and buſie to meaſure the duration of the World.

The *Stoicks* tell us, *When* the Sun and the Stars have drunk up the Sea, then the Earth ſhall be burnt. A very fair Prophecy: but how long will they be a drinking? For unleſs we can determine that, we cannot determine when this combuſtion will begin. Many of the Ancients thought that the Stars were nouriſh'd by the vapours of the Ocean and of the moiſt Earth: and when that nouriſhment was ſpent, being of a fiery nature, they would prey upon the Body of the Earth it ſelf, and conſume that, after they had conſum'd the Water. This is old-faſhion'd Philoſophy, and now, that the nature of thoſe Bodies is better known, will ſcarce paſs for currant. 'Tis true, we muſt expect ſome diſpoſitions towards the combuſtion of the World, from a great drought and deſiccation of the Earth: But this helps us nothing on our way; for the queſtion ſtill returns, *When* will this immoderate drought or dryneſs happen? and that's as ill to reſolve as the former. Therefore, as I ſaid before, I have no hopes of deciding the queſtion by Phyſiology or Natural Cauſes; let us then look up from the Earth to the Heavens, To the Aſtronomers and the Prophets; Theſe think they can define the age and duration of the World; The one by their Art, and the other by Inſpiration.

Cicer. de Nat. D. l. 2.

We begin with the Aſtronomers: whoſe Calculations are founded either upon the Aſpects and Configurations

figurations of the Planets, or upon the Revolutions of the Fixt Stars: or laſtly upon that which they call *Annus Magnus*, or the *Great Year*, whatſoever that Notion proves to be when it is rightly interpreted. As to the Planets, *Beroſus* tells us, The *Chaldeans* ſuppoſe Deluges to proceed from a great conjunction of the Planets in *Capricorn*: and from a like conjunction in the oppoſite Sign of *Cancer*, the Conflagration will enſue. So that if we compute by the Aſtronomical Tables how long it will be to ſuch a Conjunction, we find at the ſame time how long it will be to the *Conflagration*. This doctrine of the *Chaldeans* ſome Chriſtian Authors have owned, and followed the ſame principles and method. *Sen. Nat. qu. li. 3. c. 29.*

If theſe Authors would deal fairly with Mankind, they ſhould ſhew us ſome connexion betwixt theſe Cauſes and the Effects which they make conſequent upon them. For 'tis an unreaſonable thing to require a man's aſſent to a Propoſition, where he ſees no dependance or connexion of Terms; unleſs it come by Revelation, or from an infallible Authority. If you ſay, The Conflagration will be at the firſt great Conjunction of the Planets in *Cancer*, and I ſay it will be at the next Eclipſe of the Moon, if you ſhew no more reaſon for your aſſertion than I do for mine, and neither of us pretend to revelation or infallibility, we may juſtly expect to be equally credited. Pray what reaſon can you give why the Planets, when they meet, ſhould plot together, to ſet on Fire their Fellow-Planet, the Earth, who never did them any harm? But now there is a plauſible reaſon for my opinion; for the Moon, when Eclips'd may think herſelf affronted by the Earth, interpoſing rudely betwixt her and the Sun, and leaving her to grope her way in the dark; She therefore may juſtly take her revenge as ſhe can. But you'l ſay, 'tis not in the power of the Moon to ſet the Earth on Fire, if ſhe had malice enough to do it. No, nor, ſay I, is it in the power of the other Planets, that are far more diſtant from the Earth than the Moon, and as ſtark dull lumps of Earth, as ſhe is. The plain truth is, The Planets are ſo many Earths; and our Earth is as

much a Planet as the brighteſt of them. 'Tis carried about the Sun with the ſame common ſtream, and ſhines with as much luſtre to them, as they do to us: neither can they do any more harm to it, than it can do to them. 'Tis now well known, that the Planets are dark opake Bodies, generally made up of Earth and Water, as our Globe is; and have no force or action, but that of reverberating the light which the Sun caſts upon them. This blind ſuperſtitious fear or reverence for the Stars, had its original from the ancient Idolaters; They thought them Gods, and that they had domination over humane affairs. We do not indeed worſhip them, as they did; but ſome men retain ſtill the ſame opinion of their vertues, of their rule and influence upon us and our affairs, which was the ground of their worſhip. 'Tis full time now to ſweep away theſe cobwebs of ſuperſtition, theſe reliques of Paganiſm. I do not ſee how we are any more concern'd in the poſtures of the Planets, than in the poſtures of the Clouds; and you may as well build an art of prediction or divination upon the one as the other. They muſt not know much of the Philoſophy of the Heavens, or little conſider it, that think the fate, either of ſingle perſons, or of the whole Earth, can depend upon the aſpects or figur'd dances of thoſe Bodies.

But you'l ſay, it may be, tho' no reaſon can be given for ſuch effects, yet experience does atteſt the truth of them. In the firſt place, I anſwer, no experience can be produc'd for this effect we are ſpeaking of, the conflagration of the World. Secondly, experience fallaciouſly recorded, or wholly in favour of one ſide, is no proof. If a publick Regiſter was kept of all Aſtrological Predictions, and of all the events that followed upon them, right or wrong, agreeing or diſagreeing, I could willingly refer the cauſe to the determination of ſuch a Regiſter, and ſuch experience. But that which they call experience, is ſo ſtated, that if one prediction of ten, hits right or near right, it ſhall make more noiſe, and be more taken notice of, than all the nine that are falſe. Juſt as in a Lottery, where many Blanks are drawn for one Prize, yet

theſe make all the noiſe, and thoſe are forgotten. If any one be ſo lucky as to draw a good Lot, then the Trumpet ſounds, and his Name is regiſter'd, and he tells his good fortune to every body he meets: whereas thoſe that loſe, go ſilently away with empty Pockets, and are aſham'd to tell their loſſes. Such a thing is the Regiſter of Aſtrological experiences; they record what makes for their credit, but drop all blank inſtances, that would diſcover the vanity or cheat of their Art.

So much for the Planets. They have alſo a pretended calculation of the end of the World from the fixt Stars and the Firmament. Which in ſhort is this: They ſuppoſe theſe Bodies, beſides the hurry of their Diurnal motion from Eaſt to Weſt, quite round the Earth in four and twenty hours, to have another retrograde motion, from Weſt to Eaſt; which is more ſlow and leiſurely; And when they have finiſh'd the Circle of this retrogradation, and come up again to the ſame place from whence they ſtarted at the beginning of the World, then this courſe of Nature will be at an end; and either the Heavens will ceaſe from all motion, or a new ſet of motions will be put a foot, and the world begin again. This is a bundle of fictions tied up in a pretty knot. In the firſt place, there is no ſuch thing as a ſolid Firmament, in which the Stars are fixt, as nails in a board. The Heavens are as fluid as our air, and the higher we go, the more thin and ſubtle is the ethereal matter. Then, the fixt Stars are not all in one Surface, as they ſeem to us, nor at an equal diſtance from the Earth, but are plac'd in ſeveral Orbs higher and higher; there being infinite room in the great Deep of the Heavens, every way, for innumerable Stars and Spheres behind one another, to fill and beautify the immenſe ſpaces of the Univerſe. Laſtly, the fixt Stars have no motion common to them all, nor any motion ſingly, unleſs upon their own centres; and therefore, never leaving their ſtations, they can never return to any common ſtation, which they would ſuppoſe them to have had at the beginning of the World. So as this period they ſpeak of, whereby they would meaſure the duration

of

of the World, is meerly imaginary, and hath no foundation in the true nature or motion of the celeſtial Bodies.

But in the third place, They ſpeak of an ANNUS MAGNUS, a *Great Year*; A revolution ſo call'd, whatſoever it is, that is of the ſame extent with the length of the world. This notion, I confeſs, is more ancient and univerſal, and therefore I am the more apt to believe that it is not altogether groundleſs. But the difficulty is, to find out the true notion of this *Great Year*, what is to be underſtood by it, and then of what length it is. They all agree that it is a time of ſome grand inſtauration of all things, or a Reſtitution of the Heavens and the Earth to their former ſtate; that is, to the ſtate and poſture they had at the beginning of the world; ſuch therefore as will reduce the Golden age, and that happy ſtate of nature wherein things were at firſt. If ſo, if theſe be the marks and properties of this Revolution, which is call'd the *Great Year*, we need not go ſo far to find the true notion and interpretation of it. Thoſe that have read the firſt part of this Theory, may remember that in the ſecond Book we gave an account what the poſture of the Earth was at the beginning of the world, and what were the conſequences of that poſture, *A perpetual Spring* and Equinox throughout all the Earth: And if the Earth was reſtor'd again to that poſture and ſituation, all that is imputed to the *Great Year*, would immediately follow upon it, without ever diſturbing or moving the fix'd Stars, Firmament, or Planets; and yet at the ſame time all theſe three would return or be reſtor'd to the ſame poſture they had at the beginning of the world; ſo as the whole character of the *Great Year* would be truly fulfill'd, tho' not in that way which they imagin'd; but in another, more compendious, and of eaſier conception. My meaning is this, If the Axis of the Earth was rectified, and ſet parallel with the Axis of the Ecliptick, upon which the Planets, Firmament and fix'd Stars are ſuppos'd to move, all things would be as they were at firſt; A general harmony and conformity of all the motions of the Univerſe would preſently appear, ſuch, as they ſay, was

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in the Golden Age, before any diſorder came into the natural or moral World.

As this is an eaſie, ſo I do not doubt, but it is a true account of that which was originally call'd the *Great Year*, or the Great Inſtauration; which nature will bring to paſs in this ſimple method, by rectifying the Axis of the Earth, without thoſe operoſe revolutions, which ſome Aſtronomers have fanſied. But however, this account being admitted, how will it help us to define what the Age and duration of the World will be? 'Tis true, many have undertaken to tell us the length of this *Great Year*, and conſequently of the World; but, beſides that their accounts are very different, and generally of an extravagant length, if we had the true account, it would not aſſure us when the World would end; becauſe we do not know when it did begin, or what progreſs we have already made in the line of time. For I am ſatisfied, the Chronology of the World, whether ſacred or prophane, is loſt; till Providence ſhall pleaſe to retrieve it by ſome new diſcovery. As to prophane Chronology, or that of the *Heathens*, the *Greeks* and the *Romans* knew nothing above the *Olympiads*; which fell ſhort many Ages of the Deluge, much more of the beginning of the World. And the Eaſtern barbarous Nations, as they diſagreed amongſt themſelves, ſo generally they run the origine of the World to ſuch a prodigious height, as is neither agreeable to Faith, nor Reaſon. As to Sacred Chronology, 'tis well known, that the difference there is betwixt the *Greek*, *Hebrew*, and *Samaritan* Copies of the Bible, makes the Age of the World altogether undetermin'd: And there is no way yet found out, how we may certainly diſcover which of the three Copies is moſt Authentick, and conſequently what the Age of the World is, upon a true computation. Seeing therefore we have no aſſurance how long the World hath ſtood already, neither could we be aſſur'd how long it hath to ſtand, though, by this *Annus Magnus*, or any other way, the total ſum, or whole term of its duration was truly known.

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I am ſorry to ſee the little ſucceſs we have had in our firſt ſearch after the end of the World, from Aſtronomical Calculations. But 'tis an uſeful piece of knowledge to know the bounds of our knowledge; that ſo we may not ſpend our time and thoughts about things that lie out of our reach. I have little or no hopes of reſolving this point by the Light of Nature, and therefore it only remains now to enquire, Whether Providence hath made it known by any ſort of Prophecy or Revelation. Which ſhall be the Subject of the following Chapter.

CHAP. V.

Concerning Prophecies that determine the end of the World; Of what order ſoever, Prophane or Sacred: Jewiſh or Chriſtian. That no certain judgment can be made from any of them, at what diſtance we are now from the Conflagration.

THE bounds of humane knowledge are ſo narrow, and the deſire of knowing ſo vaſt and illimited, that it often puts Mankind upon irregular methods of inlargeing their knowledge. This hath made them find out arts of commerce with evil Spirits, to be inſtructed by them in ſuch Events as they could not of themſelves diſcover. We meddle not with thoſe myſteries of iniquity: but what hath appear'd under the notion of Divine Prophecy, relating to the Chronology of the World: giving either the whole extent of it, or certain marks of its expiration: theſe we purpoſe to examine in this place. How far any thing may, or may not, be concluded from them, as to the reſolution of our Problem, *How long the World will laſt.*

Amongſt

Amongſt the Heathens I do not remember any Prophecies of this nature, except the *Sibylline Oracles*, as they are uſually call'd. The ancient Eaſtern Philoſophers have left us no account that I can call to mind, about the time of this fatality. They ſay when the *Phœnix* returns we muſt expect the Conflagration to follow; but the age of the *Phœnix* they make as various and uncertain, as they do the computation of their *Great Year*: which two things are indeed one and the ſame in effect. Some of them, I confeſs, mention Six Thouſand years for the whole age of the World: which being the famous Prophecy of the *Jews*, we ſhall ſpeak to it largely hereafter: and reduce to that head what broken Traditions remain amongſt the Heathens of the ſame thing. As to the Sibylline Oracles, which were ſo much in reputation amongſt the *Greeks* and *Romans*, they have been tamper'd with ſo much, and chang'd ſo often, that they are become now of little authority. They ſeem to have divided the duration of the World into Ten Ages, and the laſt of theſe they make a Golden Age, a ſtate of peace, righteouſneſs and perfection: but ſeeing they have not determin'd, in any definite numbers, what the length of every Age will be, nor given us the ſumm of all, we cannot draw any concluſion from this account as to the point in queſtion before us. But muſt proceed to the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Oracles.

Symbolum ἀποκατασάσεως πολυχρονίε, Phœnix. Hor. Apol. l. 2. c. 57.

The *Jews* have a remarkable Prophecy, which expreſſeth both the whole and the parts of the World's duration. The World, they ſay, will ſtand Six Thouſand Years: *Two thouſand before the Law, Two thouſand under the Law, and Two thouſand under the Meſſiah.* This Prophecy they derive from *Elias*; but there were two of the Name, *Elias* the *Thesbite*, and *Elias* the *Rabbin*, or *Cabaliſt*: and 'tis ſuppos'd to belong immediately to the later of theſe. Yet this does not hinder, in my opinion, but that it might come originally from the former *Elias*, and was preſerv'd in the School of this *Elias* the *Rabbin*, and firſt made publick by him. Or he added, it may be, that diviſion of the time into three parts, and ſo got a Title to the

whole. I cannot eaſily imagine that a Doctor that liv'd two hundred years, or thereabouts, before Chriſt, when Prophecy had ceas'd for ſome Ages amongſt the *Jews*, ſhould take upon him to dictate a Prophecy about the duration of the World, unleſs he had been ſupported by ſome antecedent Cabaliſtical Tradition: which, being kept more ſecret before, he took the liberty to make publick, and ſo was reputed the Author of the Prophecy. As many Philoſophers amongſt the *Greeks*, were the reputed Authors of ſuch doctrines as were much more ancient than themſelves: But they were the publiſhers of them in their Country, or the revivers of them after a long ſilence; and ſo, by forgetful poſterity, got the honour of the firſt invention.

You will think, it may be, the time is too long and the diſtance too great betwixt *Elias* the *Thesbite*, and this *Elias* the *Rabbin*, for a Tradition to ſubſiſt all the while, or be preſerv'd with any competent integrity. But it appears from S. *Jude*'s Epiſtle, that the *Prophecies of Enoch*, (who liv'd before the Floud) relating to the day of judgment and the end of the World, were extant in his time, either in writing or by Tradition: And the diſtance betwixt *Enoch* and S. *Jude* was vaſtly greater than betwixt the two *Elias*'s. Nor was any fitter to be inſpir'd with that knowledge, or to tell the firſt news of that fatal period, than the old Prophet *Elias*, who is to come again and bring the alarum of the approaching Conflagration. But however this conjecture may prove as to the original Author of this Prophecy, the Prophecy it ſelf concerning the *Sexmillennial* duration of the World, is very much inſiſted upon by the Chriſtian Fathers. Which yet I believe is not ſo much for the bare Authority of the Tradition, as becauſe they thought it was founded in the Hiſtory of the *Six days Creation*, and the *Sabbath* ſucceeding: as alſo in ſome other Typical precepts and uſages in the Law of *Moſes*. But before we ſpeak of that, give me leave to name ſome of thoſe Fathers to you, that were of this judgment, and ſuppoſed the great Sabbatiſm would ſucceed after the World had ſtood Six thouſand years.

Of

Of this opinion was S. *Barnabas* in his Catholick Epiſtle, ch. 15. Where he argues that the Creation will be ended in Six Thouſand years, as it was finiſh'd in Six Days: Every day according to the Sacred and myſtical account, being a Thouſand Years. Of the ſame judgment is S. *Irenæus*, both as to the conclu- *Li. 5. c. 28, 29, 30.*
ſion and the reaſon of it. He ſaith, the Hiſtory of the Creation in ſix days, *is a narration as to what is paſs'd, and a Prrophecy of what is to come.* As the Work was ſaid to be conſummated in ſix days, and the Sabbath to be the ſeventh: So the conſummation of all things will be in ſix thouſand years, and then the great Sabbatiſm to come on in the bleſſed reign of Chriſt. *Hippolitus* Martyr, diſciple of *Irenæus*, is of the ſame judgment, as you may ſee in *Photius*, ch. 202. *Lactantius* in his *Divine Inſtitutions*, li. 7. c. 14. gives the very ſame account of the ſtate and continuance of the World, and the ſame proofs for it. And ſo does S. *Cyprian*, in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom, ch.* 11. S. *Jerome* more than once declares himſelf of the ſame opinion; and S. *Auſtin*, tho' he wavers and was *C. D. li. 20. c. 7.*
doubtful as to the *Millennium*, or Reign of Chriſt upon Earth, yet he receives this computation without heſitancy, and upon the forementiond grounds. So *Johannes Damaſcenus de fide Orthodoxâ*, takes ſeven Millenaries for the entire ſpace of the World, from the Creation to the general Reſurrection, the Sabbatiſm being included. And that this was a received and approv'd opinion in early times, we may collect from the Author of the *Queſtions and anſwers ad Orthodoxos in Juſtin Martyr.* Who giving an anſwer to that enquiry about the ſix thouſand-years-term of the World, ſays, *We may conjecture from many places of Scripture, that thoſe are in the right, that ſay ſix thouſand years is the time prefixt for the duration of this preſent frame of the World.* Theſe Authors I have examin'd my ſelf: but there are many others brought in confirmation of this opinion: as S. *Hilary*, *Anaſtatius Sinaita*, Sanctus *Gaudentius*, Q. *Julius Hilarion*, *Junilius Africanus*, *Iſidorus Hiſpalenſis*, *Caſſiodorus*, *Gregorius Magnus*, and others, which I leave to be examin'd by thoſe that have curioſity and leiſure to do it.

In the mean time it muſt be confeſt that many of theſe Fathers were under a miſtake in one reſpect, in that they generally thought, the World was near an end in their time. An errour, which we need not take pains to confute now; ſeeing we, who live twelve hundred or fourteen hundred years after them, find the World ſtill in being, and likely to continue ſo for ſome conſiderable time. But it is eaſie to diſcern whence their miſtake proceeded: not from this Prophecy alone, but becauſe they reckon'd this Prophecy according to the Chronology of the Septuagint: which ſetting back the beginning of the World many Ages beyond the *Hebrew*, theſe ſix thouſand years were very near expir'd in the time of thoſe Fathers; and that made them conclude that the World was very near an end. We will make no reflections, in this place, upon that Chronology of the Septuagint, leſt it ſhould too much interrupt the thred of our diſcourſe. But it is neceſſary to ſhow how the Fathers grounded this computation of ſix thouſand years, upon Scripture. 'Twas chiefly, as we ſuggeſted before, upon the *Hexameron*, or the Creation finiſh'd in *ſix days*, and the *Sabbath* enſuing. The Sabbath, they ſaid, was a type of the Sabbatiſm, that was to follow at the end of the World, according to St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews*; and then by analogy and conſequence, the ſix days preceding the Sabbath, muſt note the ſpace and duration of the World. If therefore they could diſcover how much a Day is reckon'd for, in this myſtical computation, the ſum of the ſix days would be eaſily found out. And they think, that according to the Pſalmiſt, (*Pſal.* 90. 4.) and St. *Peter*, (2 *Epiſt.* 3. 8.) *a Day* may be eſtimated *a thouſand years*; and conſequently ſix days muſt be counted ſix thouſand years, for the duration of the World. This is their interpretation, and their inference: but it muſt be acknowledged, that there is an eſſential weakneſs in all typical and allegorical argumentations, in compariſon of literal. And this being allow'd in diminution of the proof, we may be bold to ſay, that nothing yet appears, either in nature, or Scripture, or humane affairs, repugnant to this ſuppoſition of ſix thouſand years:

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years: which hath Antiquity, and the Authority of the Fathers, on its ſide.

We proceed now to the Chriſtian Prophecies concerning the end of the World. I do not mention thoſe in *Daniel*, becauſe I am not ſatisfied that any there (excepting that of the fifth kingdom it ſelf) extend ſo far. But in the *Apocalypſe* of St. *John*, which is the laſt Revelation we are to expect, there are ſeveral Prophecies that reach to the Conſummation of this World, and the firſt Reſurrection. The *ſeven Seals*, the *ſeven Trumpets*, the *ſeven Vials*, do all terminate upon that great period. But they are rather Hiſtorical Prophecies than Chronological: they tell us, in their Language, the Events, but do not meaſure or expreſs the time wherein they come to paſs. Others there are that may be call'd Chronological, as the *Treading under foot the holy City, forty and two months.* Apoc. 11. 2. The *Witneſſes* oppoſing Antichriſt, *one thouſand two hundred and ſixty days*, Apoc. 11. 3. The flight of the *Woman into the Wilderneſs*, for the ſame number of days, or for a *Time, Times, and half a Time.* Apoc. 12. 6. & 14. And laſtly, the War of the Beaſt againſt the Saints, *forty two months*, Apoc. 13. 5. Theſe all, you ſee, expreſs a time for their completion; And all the ſame time, if I be not miſtaken: but they do not reach to the end of the World. Or if ſome of them did reach ſo far, yet becauſe we do not certainly know where to fix their beginning, we muſt ſtill be at a loſs, when, or in what year they will end. As for inſtance, If the Reign of the Beaſt, or the preaching of the Witneſſes be 1260. years, as is reaſonably ſuppos'd; yet if we do not know certainly when this Reign, or this preaching begun, neither can we tell when it will end. And the Epocha's or beginnings of theſe Prophecies are ſo differently calculated, and are things of ſo long debate, as makes the diſcuſſion of them altogether improper for this place. Yet it muſt be confeſt, that the beſt conjectures that can be made concerning the approaching end of the World, muſt be taken from a judicious examination of theſe points: and according as we gather up the Prophecies of the Apocalypſe, in a ſucceſſive completion, we

ſee

ſee how by degrees we draw nearer and nearer to the concluſion of all. But till ſome of theſe enlightening Prophecies be accompliſh'd, we are as a Man that awakes in the Night, all is dark about him, and he knows not how far the Night is ſpent: but if he watch till the light appears, the firſt glimpſes of that will reſolve his doubts. We muſt have a little patience, and, I think, but a little; ſtill eyeing thoſe Prophecies of the *Reſurrection* of the *Witneſſes*, and the *depreſſion* of *Antichriſt*: till by their accompliſhment, the day dawn, and the Clouds begin to change their colour. Then we ſhall be able to make a near gueſs, when the Sun of righteouſneſs will ariſe.

So much for Prophecies. There are alſo *Signs*, which are look'd upon as forerunners of the coming of our Saviour: and therefore may give us ſome direction how to judge of the diſtance or approach of that great Day. Thus many of the Fathers thought the *coming* of *Antichriſt* would be a ſign to give the World notice of its approaching end. But we may eaſily ſee, by what hath been noted before, what it was that led the Fathers into that miſtake. They thought their ſix thouſand years were near an end, as they truly were, according to that Chronology they followed; and therefore they concluded the Reign of Antichriſt muſt be very ſhort, whenſoever he came, and that he could not come long before the end of the World. But we are very well aſſur'd from the Revelation of St. *John*, that the reign of Antichriſt is not to be ſo ſhort and tranſient; and from the proſpect and hiſtory of Chriſtendom, that he hath been already upon his Throne many hundreds of Years. Therefore this Sign wholly falls to the ground; unleſs you will take it from the fall of Antichriſt, rather than from his firſt entrance. Others expect the *coming* of *Elias* to give warning of that day, and prepare the way of the Lord. I am very willing to admit that *Elias* will come, according to the ſence of the Prophet *Malachi*, but he will not come *with obſervation*, no more than he did in the Perſon of *John* the Baptiſt; He will not bear the name of *Elias*, nor tell us he is the Man that went to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, and is now come down

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again

again to give us warning of the laſt Fire. But ſome divine perſon may appear before the ſecond coming of our Saviour, as there did before his firſt coming: and by giving a new light and life to the Chriſtian Doctrine, may diſſipate the miſts of error, and aboliſh all thoſe little controverſies amongſt good men, and the diviſions and animoſities that ſpring from them: enlarging their Spirits by greater diſcoveries, and uniting them all in the bonds of love and charity, and in the common ſtudy of truth and perfection. Such an *Elias*, the Prophet ſeems to point at; And may he come, and be the great Peace-maker and preparer of the ways of the Lord. But at preſent, we cannot from this Sign make any judgment when the World will end.

Another Sign preceeding the end of the World, is, *The Converſion of the Jews*; and this is a wonderful ſign indeed. S. *Paul* ſeems expreſly to affirm it, *Rom.* 11. 25, 26. But it is differently underſtood, either of their Converſion only, or of their Reſtoration to their own Countrey, Liberties and Dominion. The Prophets bear hard upon this ſence ſometimes, as you may ſee in *Iſaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Hoſea*, *Amos*. And to the ſame purpoſe the ancient promiſe of *Moſes* is interpreted, *Deut.* 30. Yet this ſeems to be a thing very unconceivable; unleſs we ſuppoſe the Ten Tribes to be ſtill in ſome hidden corner of the World, from whence they may be conducted again into their own Countrey, as once out of *Egypt*, by a miraculous Providence, and eſtabliſh'd there. Which being known, will give the alarum to all the other *Jews* in the World, and make an univerſal confluence to their old home. Then our Saviour by an extraordinary appearance to them, as once to S. *Paul*: and by Prophets rais'd up amongſt them for that purpoſe, may convince them that he is the true Meſſiah, and convert them to the Chriſtian Faith; which will be no more ſtrange, than was the firſt Converſion of the Gentile World. But if we be content with a Converſion of the *Jews*, without their reſtoration; and of thoſe Two Tribes only which are now diſperſt throughout the Chriſtian World and other known

Joh. 19. 37. *Apoc.* 1. 7. *Mat.* 23. 39.

parts

parts of the Earth: That these should be Converted to the Christian Faith, and incorporated into the Christian Commonwealth, losing their national character and distinction. If this, I say, will satisfie the Prophecies, it is not a thing very difficult to be conceived. For when the World is reduc'd to a better and purer state of Christianity, and that Idolatry in a great measure, remov'd, which gave the greatest scandal to the *Jews*, they will begin to have better thoughts of our Religion, and be dispos'd to a more ingenuous and unprejudic'd examination of their Prophecies concerning the Messiah: God raising up men amongst them of divine and enlarged Spirits, Lovers of Truth more than of any particular Sect or Opinion; with light to discern it, and courage to profess it. Lastly, it will be a cogent argument upon them, to see the Age of the World so far spent, and no appearance yet of their long expected Messiah. So far spent, I say, that there is no room left, upon any computation whatsoever, for the Oeconomy of a Messiah yet to come. This will make them reflect more carefully and impartially upon him whom the Christians propose, *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their Fathers Crucified at *Jerusalem*. Upon the Miracles he wrought, in his life and after his death: and upon the wonderful propagation of his Doctrine throughout the World, after his Ascension. And lastly, upon the desolation of *Jerusalem*, upon their own scatter'd and forlorn condition, foretold by that Prophet, as a judgment of God upon an ungrateful and wicked People.

This I have said to state the case of the Conversion of the *Jews*, which will be a sign of the approaching reign of Christ. But alas, what appearance is there of this Conversion in our days, or what judgment can we make from a sign that is not yet come to pass? 'Tis ineffectual as to us, but may be of use to posterity. Yet even to them it will not determine at what distance they are from the end of the World, but be a mark only that they are not far from it. There will be Signs also, in those last days, in the Heavens, and in the Earth, and in the Sea, fore-

runners

runners of the *Conflagration*; as the obſcuration of the Sun and Moon, Earth-quakes, roarings of the troubled Sea, and ſuch like diſorders in the natural World. 'Tis true, but theſe are the very pangs of death, and the ſtrugglings of Nature juſt before her diſſolution, and it will be too late then to be aware of our ruine when it is at the door. Yet theſe being Signs or Prodigies taken notice of by Scripture, we intend, God willing, after we have explained the cauſes and manner of the *Conflagration*, to give an account alſo whence theſe unnatural commotions will proceed, that are the beginnings or immediate introductions to the laſt Fire.

Thus we have gone through the Prophecies and Signs that concern the laſt day and the laſt fate of the World. And how little have we learned from them as to the time of that great revolution? Prophecies riſe ſometimes with an even gradual light, as the day riſeth upon the Horizon: and ſometimes break out ſuddenly like a fire, and we are not aware of their approach till we ſee them accompliſh'd. Thoſe that concern the end of the World are of this latter ſort to unobſerving men; but even to the moſt obſerving, there will ſtill be a latitude; We muſt not expect to calculate the coming of our Saviour like an Eclipſe, to minutes and half-minutes. There are *Times and Seaſons which the Father hath put in his own power.* If it was deſigned to keep theſe things ſecret, we muſt not think to out-wit Providence, and from the Prophecies that are given us, pick out a diſcovery that was not intended we ſhould ever make. It is determin'd in the Councils of Heaven juſt how far we ſhall know theſe events before-hand, and with what degree of certainty: and with this we muſt be content whatſoever it is. The *Apocalypſe* of S. *John* is the laſt Prophetical declaration of the Will of God, and contains the fate of the Chriſtian Religion to the end of the World, its purity, degeneracy, and reviviſcency. The head of this degeneracy is call'd *The Beaſt, the falſe Prophet, the whore of Babylon,* in Prophetical terms: and in an Eccleſiaſtical term is commonly call'd *Antichriſt.* Thoſe that bear Teſtimony

againſt this degeneracy, are call'd the *Witneſſes*: who, after they have been a long time, in a mean and perſecuted condition, are to have their Reſurrection and Aſcenſion: that is, be advanc'd to power and Authority. And this Reſurrection of the *Witneſſes* and depreſſion of *Antichriſt*, is that which will make the great turn of the World to righteouſneſs, and the great Criſis whereby we may judge of its drawing to an end. 'Tis true, there are other marks, as the paſſing away of the *Apoc. c. 9.* *Second Woe*: which is commonly thought to be the *Apoc. c. 16.* Ottoman Empire: and the Effuſion of the *Vials*. The firſt of theſe will be indeed a very conſpicuous mark, *ch. 11. 14.* if it follow upon the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, as by the Prophecy it ſeems to do. But as to the Vials, tho' they do plainly reach in a Series to the end of the World, I am not ſatisfied with any expoſition I have yet met with, concerning their preciſe time or contents.

In a word, Tho' the ſum and general contents of a Prophecy be very intelligible, yet the application of it to Time and Perſons may be very lubricous. There muſt be obſcurity in a Prophecy, as well as ſhadow in a Picture. All its lines muſt not ſtand in a full light. For if Prophecies were open and bare-fac'd as to all their parts and circumſtances, they would check and obſtruct the courſe of humane affairs; and hinder, if it was poſſible, their own accompliſhment. Modeſty and Sobriety are in all things commendable, but in nothing more than in the explication of theſe Sacred Myſteries; and we have ſeen ſo many miſcarry by a too cloſe and particular application of them, that we ought to dread the Rock about which we ſee ſo many ſhipwrecks. He that does not err above a Century in calculating the laſt period of Time, from what evidence we have at preſent, hath, in my opinion, caſt up his accounts very well. But the Scenes will change faſt towards the Evening of this long day, and when the Sun is near ſetting, they will more eaſily compute how far he hath to run.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Concerning the Cauſes of the Conflagration.

The difficulty of conceiving how this Earth can be ſet on fire. With a general anſwer to that difficulty. Two ſuppos'd cauſes of the Conflagration, by the Sun's drawing nearer to the Earth, or the Earth's throwing out the central fire, examin'd and rejected.

WE have now made our way clear to the principal point, *The Cauſes of the Conflagration:* How the Heavens and the Earth will be ſet on fire, what materials are prepar'd, or what train of cauſes, for that purpoſe. The Ancients, who have kept us company pretty well thus far, here quite deſert us. They deal more in Concluſions than Cauſes, as is uſual in all Traditional Learning. And the *Stoicks* themſelves, who inculcate ſo much the doctrine of the Conflagration, and make the ſtrength of it ſuch as to diſſolve the Earth into a fiery Chaos, are yet very ſhort and ſuperficial in their explications, how this ſhall come to paſs. The latent ſeeds of fire, they ſay, ſhall every where be let looſe, and that Element will prevail over all the reſt, and transform every thing into its own nature. But theſe are general things that give little ſatisfaction to inquiſitive Perſons. Neither do the modern Authors that treat of the ſame ſubject, relieve us in this particular: They are willing to ſuppoſe the Conflagration a ſupernatural effect, that ſo they may excuſe themſelves the trouble of enquiring after cauſes. 'Tis, no doubt, in a ſort, ſupernatural: and ſo the Deluge was: yet *Moſes* ſets down the cauſes of the Deluge, the rains from above, and the diſruption of the Abyſs. So there muſt be treaſures of fire provided againſt that day, by whoſe eruption this ſecond Deluge will be brought upon the Earth.

To ſtate the caſe fairly, we muſt firſt repreſent the difficulty of ſetting the Earth on fire: Tie the knot, before we looſe it; that ſo we may the better judge whether the cauſes that ſhall be brought into view, may be ſufficient to overcome ſo great oppoſition. The difficulty, no doubt, will be chiefly from the great quantity of water that is about our Globe; whereby Nature ſeems to have made proviſion againſt any invaſion by fire, and ſecur'd us from that enemy more than any other. We ſee half of the Surface of the Earth cover'd with the Seas: whoſe Chanel is of a vaſt depth and capacity. Beſides innumerable Rivers, great and ſmall, that water the face of the dry Land, and drench it with perpetual moiſture. Then within the bowels of the Earth, there are Store-houſes of ſubterraneous waters: which are as a reſerve, in caſe the Ocean and the Rivers ſhould be overcome. Neither is water our onely ſecurity, for the hard Rocks and ſtony Mountains, which no fire can bite upon, are ſet in long ranges upon the Continents and Iſlands: and muſt needs give a ſtop to the progreſs of that furious Enemy, in caſe he ſhould attack us. Laſtly, the Earth it ſelf is not combuſtible in all its parts. 'Tis not every Soyl that is fit fewel for the fire. Clay, and Mire, and ſuch like Soyles will rather choak and ſtifle it, than help it on its way. By theſe means one would think the Body of the Earth ſecur'd; And tho' there may be partial fires, or inundations of fire, here and there, in particular regions, yet there cannot be an univerſal fire throughout the Earth. At leaſt one would hope for a ſafe retreat towards the Poles, where there is nothing but Snow, and Ice, and bitter cold. Theſe regions ſure are in no danger to be burnt, whatſoever becomes of the other climates of the Earth.

This being the ſtate and condition of the preſent Earth, one would not imagine by theſe preparations, 'twas ever intended that it ſhould periſh by an univerſal fire. But ſuch is often the method of Providence, that the exteriour face of things looks one way, and the deſign lies another; till at length, touching a Spring, as it were, at a certain time, all thoſe affairs change poſture and aſpect, and ſhew us which way

Provi-

Providence inclines. We muſt therefore ſuppoſe, before the Conflagration begins, there will be diſpoſitions and preparatives ſuitable to ſo great a work: and all antiquity, ſacred and prophane, does ſo far concur with us, as to admit and ſuppoſe that a great drought will precede, and an extraordinary heat and drineſs of the Air, to uſher in this fiery doom. And theſe being things which often happen in a courſe of nature, we cannot diſallow ſuch eaſie preparations, when Providence intends ſo great a conſequence. The Heavens will be ſhut up, and the Clouds yield no rain; and by this, with an immoderate heat in the Air, the Springs of water will become dry, the Earth chap'd and parch'd, and the Woods and Trees made ready fewel for the fire. We have inſtances in hiſtory that there have been droughts and heats of this nature, to that degree, that the Woods and Foreſts have taken fire, and the outward Turf and Surface of the Earth, without any other cauſe than the drineſs of the Seaſon, and the vehemency of the Sun. And which is more conſiderable, the Springs and Fountains being dry'd up, the greater Rivers have been ſenſibly leſſen'd, and the leſſer quite emptied and exhal'd. Theſe things which happen frequently in particular Countreys and Climates, may at an appointed time, by the diſpoſition of Providence, be more univerſal throughout the Earth; and have the ſame effects every where, that we ſee by experience they have had in certain places. And by this means we may conceive it as feiſible to ſet the whole Earth on fire in ſome little ſpace of time, as to burn up this or that Countrey after a great drought. But I mean this, with exception ſtill to the main Body of the Sea; which will indeed receive a greater diminution from theſe cauſes than we eaſily imagine, but the final conſumption of it will depend upon other reaſons, whereof we muſt give an account in the following Chapters.

As to the Mountains and Rocks, their lofty heads will ſink when the Earthquakes begin to roar, at the beginning of the Conflagration: as we ſhall ſee hereafter. And as to the Earth it ſelf, 'tis true there are ſeveral ſorts of earth that are not proper fewel for fire; but

but thoſe Soils that are not ſo immediately, as clayey Soils, and ſuch like, may by the ſtrength of fire be converted into brick, or ſtone, or earthen metal, and ſo melted down and vitrified. For, in concluſion, there is no terreſtrial Body that does not finally yield to the force of fire, and may either be converted into flame, incorporated fire, or into a liquor more ardent than either of them. Laſtly, as to the polar regions, which you think will be a ſafe retreat and inacceſſible to the fire; 'Tis true, unleſs Providence hath laid ſubterraneous treaſures of fire there unknown to us, thoſe parts of the Earth will be the laſt conſum'd. But it is to be obſerv'd, that the cold of thoſe regions proceeds from the length of their Winter, and their diſtance from the Sun when he is beyond the Æquator; and both theſe cauſes will be remov'd at the Conflagration. For we ſuppoſe the Earth will then return to its primitive ſituation, which we have explain'd in the 2*d*. Book of this Theory; and will have the Sun always in its Equator; whereby the ſeveral Climates of the Earth will have a perpetual Equinox, and thoſe under the Poles a perpetual day. And therefore all the exceſs of cold, and all the conſequences of it, will ſoon be abated. However, the Earth will not be burnt in one day, and thoſe parts of the Earth being uninhabited, there is no inconvenience that they ſhould be more ſlowly conſum'd than the reſt.

chap. 3.

This is a general anſwer to the difficulty propos'd about the poſſibility of the Conflagration; and being general onely, the parts of it muſt be more fully explain'd and confirm'd in the ſequel of this diſcourſe. We ſhould now proceed directly to the cauſes of the Conflagration, and ſhow in what manner they do this great execution upon nature. But to be juſt and impartial in this enquiry, we ought firſt to ſeparate the ſpurious and pretended cauſes from thoſe that are real and genuine; to make no falſe muſters, nor any ſhow of being ſtronger than we are; and if we can do our work with leſs force, it will be more to our credit; as a Victory is more honourable that is gain'd with fewer Men.

There

There are two grand capital cauſes which ſome Authors make uſe of, as the chief Agents in this work, the *Sun*, and the *Central Fire*. Theſe two great Incendiaries, they ſay, will be let looſe upon us at the Conflagration. The one drawing nearer to the Earth, and the other breaking out of its bowels into theſe upper regions. Theſe are potent cauſes indeed, more than enough to deſtroy this Earth, if it was a thouſand times bigger than it is. But for that very reaſon, I ſuſpect they are not the true cauſes; for God and Nature do not uſe to employ unneceſſary means to bring about their deſigns. Diſproportion and over-ſufficiency is one ſort of falſe meaſures, and 'tis a ſign we do not thoroughly underſtand our work, when we put more ſtrength to it than the thing requires. Men are forward to call in extraordinary powers, to rid their hands of a troubleſome argument, and ſo make a ſhort diſpatch to ſave themſelves the pains of further enquiries: but ſuch methods, as they commonly have no proof, ſo they give little ſatisfaction to an inquiſitive mind. This ſuppoſition of burning the Earth, by the Sun drawing nearer and nearer to it, ſeems to be made in imitation of the ſtory of *Phaeton*, who driving the Chariot of the Sun with an unſteddy hand, came ſo near the Earth, that he ſet it on fire. But however we will not reject any pretenſions without a fair trial; Let us examine therefore what grounds they can have for either of theſe ſuppoſitions, of the Approximation of the Sun to the Earth, or the Eruption of the Central Fire.

As to the Sun, I deſire firſt to be ſatisfied in preſent matter of Fact: whether by any inſtrument or obſervation it hath or can be diſcover'd, that the Sun is nearer to the Earth now, than he was in former ages? or if by any reaſoning or comparing calculations ſuch a concluſion can be made? If not, this is but an imaginary cauſe, and as eaſily deny'd as propos'd. Aſtronomers do very little agree in their opinions about the diſtance of the Sun, *Ptolomy*, *Albategnius*, *Copernicus*, *Tycho*, *Kepler*, and others more modern, differ all in their calculations; but not in ſuch a manner or proportion, as ſhould make us believe that the Sun comes

nearer

nearer to the Earth, but rather goes further from it. For the more modern of them make the distance greater than the more ancient do. *Kepler* says, the distance of the Sun from the Earth lies betwixt 700 and 2000 semidiameters of the Earth: but *Ricciolus* makes it betwixt 700 and 7000. And *Gottefrid Wendeline* hath taken 14656. semidiameters, for a middle proportion of the Sun's distance; to which *Kepler* himself came very near in his later years. So that you see how groundless our fears are from the approaches of an enemy, that rather flies from us, if he change posture at all. And we have more reason to believe the report of the modern Astronomers than of the ancient, in this matter; both because the nature of the Heavens and of the celestial Bodies is now better known, and also because they have found out better instruments and better methods to make their observations.

If the Sun and Earth were come nearer to one another, either the circle of the Suns diurnal arch would be less, and so the day shorter: or the Orbit of the Earths annual course would be less, and so the Year shorter: Neither of which we have any experience of. And those that suppose us in the centre of the World, need not be afraid till they see *Mercury* and *Venus* in a combustion, for they lie betwixt us and danger; and the Sun cannot come so readily at us with his fiery darts, as at them, who stand in his way. Lastly, this languishing death by the gradual approaches of the Sun, and that irreparable ruine of the Earth which at last must follow from it, do neither of them agree with that Idea of the *Conflagration*, which the Scripture hath given us; for it is to come suddenly and unexpectedly, and take us off like a violent Feaver, not as a lingring Consumption. And the Earth is also so to be destroyed by Fire, as not to take away all hopes of a Resurrection or Renovation. For we are assur'd by Scripture that there will be new Heavens and a new Earth after these are burnt up. But if the Sun should come so near us as to make the *heavens pass away with a noise, and melt the Elements with fervent heat*, and destroy the form and all the works of

of the Earth, what hopes or poſſibility would there be of a Renovation while the Sun continued in this poſture? He would more and more conſume and prey upon the Carcaſs of the Earth, and convert it at length either into an heap of aſhes, or a lump of vitrified metal.

So much for the Sun. As to the *Central Fire*, I am very well ſatisfied it is no imaginary thing. All Antiquity hath preſerv'd ſome ſacred Monument of it. The *Veſtal* fire of the *Romans*, which was ſo religiouſly attended: The *Prytoneia* of the *Greeks* were to the ſame purpoſe, and dedicated to *Veſta*: and the *Pyretheia* of the *Perſians*, where fire was kept continually by the *Magi*. Theſe all, in my opinion, had the ſame origine and the ſame ſignification. And tho' I do not know any particular obſervation, that does directly prove or demonſtrate that there is ſuch a maſs of fire in the middle of the Earth; yet the beſt accounts we have of the generation of a Planet, do ſuppoſe it; and 'tis agreeable to the whole Oeconomy of Nature; as a fire in the heart, which gives life to her motions and productions. But however the queſtion is not at preſent, about the exiſtence of this fire, but the eruption of it, and the effect of that Eruption: which cannot be, in my judgment, ſuch a *Conflagration* as is deſcrib'd in Scripture.

This Central Fire muſt be enclos'd in a ſhell of great ſtrength and firmneſs; for being of it ſelf the lighteſt and moſt active of all Bodies, it would not be detained in that loweſt priſon without a ſtrong guard upon it. 'Tis true, we can make no certain judgment of what thickneſs this ſhell is, but if we ſuppoſe this fire to have a twentieth part of the ſemidiameter of the Earth, on either ſide the centre, for its ſphere, which ſeems to be a fair allowance; there would ſtill remain nineteen parts, for our ſafeguard and ſecurity. And theſe nineteen parts of the ſemidiameter of the Earth will make 3268 miles, for a partition-wall betwixt us and this Central Fire. Who wou'd be afraid of an Enemy lock'd up in ſo ſtrong a priſon? But you'l ſay, it may be, tho' the Central Fire, at the beginning of the World, might have no more room

or ſpace than what is mentioned: yet being of that activity that it is, and corroſive nature, it may, in the ſpace of ſome thouſands of years, have eaten deep into the ſides of its priſon; and ſo come nearer to the ſurface of the Earth, by ſome hundreds or thouſands of miles than it was at firſt. This would be a material exception if it could be made out. But what Phænomenon is there in Nature that proves this? How does it appear by any obſervation that the Central Fire gains ground upon us? Or is increaſed in quantity, or come nearer to the ſurface of the Earth? I know nothing that can be offered in proof of this: and if there be no appearance of a change, nor any ſenſible effect of it, 'tis an argument there is none, or none conſiderable. If the quantity of that fire was conſiderably increas'd, it muſt needs, beſides other effects, have made the Body of the Earth conſiderably lighter. The Earth having, by this converſion of its own ſubſtance into fire, loſt ſo much of its heavieſt matter, and got ſo much of the lighteſt and moſt active Element in ſtead of it: and in both theſe reſpects its gravity would be manifeſtly leſſen'd. Which if it really was, in any conſiderable degree, it would diſcover it ſelf by ſome change, either as to the motion of the Earth, or as to its place or ſtation in the Heavens. But there being no external change obſervable, in this or any other reſpect, 'tis reaſonable to preſume that there is no conſiderable inward change, or no great conſumption of its inward parts and ſubſtance: and conſequently no great increaſe of the Central Fire.

But if we ſhould admit both an encreaſe and eruption of this fire, it would not have that effect which is pretended. It might cauſe ſome confuſion and diſorder in thoſe parts of the Earth where it broke out, but it would not make an univerſal Conflagration, ſuch as is repreſented to us in Scripture. Let us ſuppoſe the Earth to be open or burſt in any place, under the Pole, for inſtance, or under the Æquator: and let it gape as low as the Central Fire. At this chaſm or rupture we ſuppoſe the fire wou'd guſh out; and what then would be the conſequence of this when

when it came to the ſurface of the Earth? It would either be diſſipated and loſt in the air, or fly ſtill higher towards the Heavens in a maſs of flame. But what execution in the mean time would it do upon the Body of the Earth? 'Tis but like a flaſh of lightning, or a flame iſſuing out of a pit, that dies preſently. Beſides, this Central Fire is of that ſubtilty and tenuity that it is not able to inflame groſs Bodies: no more than thoſe Meteors we call *Lambent Fires*, inflame the bodies to which they ſtick. Laſtly, in explaining the manner of the Conflagration, we muſt have regard principally to Scripture; for the explications given there are more to the purpoſe, than all that the Philoſophers have ſaid upon that ſubject. Now, as we noted before, 'tis manifeſt in Scripture that after the Conflagration there will be a *Reſtauration*, *New Heavens* and a *New Earth*. 'Tis the expreſs doctrine of S. *Peter*, beſides other Prophets: We muſt therefore ſuppoſe the Earth reduc'd to ſuch a Chaos by this laſt fire, as will lay the foundation of a new World. Which can never be, if the inward frame of it be broke, the Central Fire exhauſted, and the exterior region ſuck'd into thoſe central vacuities. This muſt needs make it loſe its former poiſe and libration, and it will thereupon be thrown into ſome other part of the Univerſe, as the uſeleſs ſhell of a broken Granado, or as a dead carkaſs and unprofitable matter.

2 *Pet.* 3. 12, 13.

Theſe reaſons may be ſufficient why we ſhould not depend upon thoſe pretended cauſes of the Conflagration, The Suns advance towards the Earth, or ſuch a rupture of the Earth as will let out the Central Fire. Theſe Cauſes, I hope, will appear ſuperfluous, when we ſhall have given an account of the Conflagration without them. But young Philoſophers, like young Soldiers, think they are never ſufficiently armed; and often take more weapons, than they can make uſe of, when they come to fight. Not that we altogether reject the influence of the Sun, or of the Central Fire; eſpecially the latter. For in that great eſtuation of Nature, the Body of the Earth will be much open'd and relaxated; and when the pores are

enlarg'd, the ſteams of that fire will ſweat out more plentifully into all its parts; but ſtill without any rupture in the veſſels or in the skin. And whereas theſe Authors ſuppoſe the very Veins burſt, and the vital blood to guſh out, as at open flood-gates, we onely allow a more copious perſpiration, and think that ſufficient for all purpoſes in this caſe.

CHAP. VII.

The true bounds of the Laſt Fire, and how far it is fatal. The natural Cauſes and Materials of it, caſt into three ranks: Firſt, ſuch as are exteriour and viſible upon the Earth; where the Volcano's of the Earth, and their effects, are conſider'd. Secondly, ſuch materials as are within the Earth. Thirdly, ſuch as are in the Air.

AS we have, in the preceding Chapter, laid aſide thoſe Cauſes of the Conflagration, which we thought too great and cumberſome; ſo now we muſt, in like manner, examine the Effect, and reduce that to its juſt meaſures and proportions; that there may be nothing left ſuperfluous on either ſide: Then, by comparing the real powers with the work they are to do, both being ſtated within their due bounds, we may the better judge how they are proportion'd to one another.

We noted before, that the Conflagration had nothing to do with the Stars and ſuperiour Heavens, but was wholly confin'd to this Sublunary World. And this Deluge of Fire will have much what the ſame bounds, that the Deluge of Water had formerly. This is according to St. *Peter*'s doctrine, for he makes the ſame parts of the Univerſe to be the ſubject of both: namely, the inferiour Heavens and the Earth. *The*

2 *Pet.* 3. 5, 6. *Heavens and the Earth which were then, periſh'd in a*

Deluge

Deluge of Water: But the Heavens and the Earth that are now, are reſerv'd to fire. The preſent Heavens and Earth are ſubſtituted in the place of thoſe that periſh'd at the Deluge, and theſe are to be over-run and deſtroy'd by fire, as thoſe were by water. So that the Apoſtle takes the ſame Regions, and the ſame ſpace and compaſs for the one as for the other, and makes their fate different according to their different conſtitution, and the different order of Providence. This is the ſence St. *Auſtin* gives us of the Apoſtle's words, and theſe are the bounds he ſets to the laſt Fire; whereof a modern Commentator is ſo well aſſur'd, that he ſays, *They neither underſtand Divinity, nor Philoſophy, that would make the Conflagration reach above the Elementary Heavens.* *Ver.* 7. *Eſtius in loc.*

Let theſe be then its limits upwards, the Clouds, Air, and Atmoſphere of the Earth. But the queſtion ſeems more doubtful, *How* far it will extend downwards, into the bowels of the Earth. I anſwer ſtill, to the ſame depth that the Waters of the Deluge reach'd: To the loweſt Abyſſes and the deepeſt Caverns within the ground. And ſeeing no Caverns are deeper or lower, at leaſt according to our Theory, than the bottom of the great Ocean, to that depth, I ſuppoſe, the rage of this fire will penetrate, and devour all before it. And therefore we muſt not imagine, that onely the outward turf and habitable ſurface of the Earth will be put into a flame and laid waſt; the whole exteriour region of the Earth, to the depth of the deepeſt part of the Sea, will ſuffer in this fire; and ſuffer to that degree, as to be melted down, and the frame of it diſſolv'd. For we are not to conceive that the Earth will be onely ſcorcht or charkt in the laſt fire, there will be a ſort of liquefaction and diſſolution; It will become a *molten Sea mingled with fire*, according to the expreſſion of Scripture. And this diſſolution may reaſonably be ſuppos'd to reach as low as the Earth hath any hollowneſſes, or can give vent to ſmoak and flame. *Rev.* 15. 2. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *Pſal.* 97. 5.

Wherefore taking theſe for the bounds and limits of the laſt great fire, the next thing to be enquir'd into, are the *Natural Cauſes* of it. How this ſtrange fate

fate will ſeize upon the Sublunary World, and with an irreſiſtible fury ſubdue all things to it ſelf. But when I ſay *Natural Cauſes*, I would not be ſo underſtood, as if I thought the Conflagration was a pure *Natural Fatality*, as the *Stoicks* ſeem to do. No, 'tis a *mixt Fatality*; The Cauſes indeed are natural, but the adminiſtration of them is from an higher hand. Fire is the Inſtrument, or the executive power, and hath no more force given it, than what it hath naturally; but the concurrence of theſe cauſes, or of theſe fiery powers, at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a manner, and the conduct of them to carry on and compleat the whole work without ceſſation or interruption, that I look upon as more than what material Nature could effect of it ſelf, or than could be brought to paſs by ſuch a government of matter, as is the bare reſult of its own laws and determinations. When a Ship ſails gently before the wind, the Mariners may ſtand idle; but to guide her in a ſtorm, all hands muſt be at work. There are rules and meaſures to be obſerv'd, even in theſe tumults and deſolations of Nature, in deſtroying a World, as well as in making one, and therefore in both it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe a more than ordinary Providence to ſuperintend the work. Let us not therefore be too poſitive or preſumptuous in our conjectures about theſe things, for if there be an inviſible hand, Divine or Angelical, that touches the Springs and Wheels; it will not be eaſie for us to determine, with certainty, the order of their motions. However, 'tis our duty to ſearch into the ways and works of God, as far as we can: And we may without offence look into the Magazines of Nature, ſee what proviſions are made, and what preparations for this great Day; and in what method 'tis moſt likely the deſign will be executed.

But before we proceed to mark out Materials for this fire, give me leave to obſerve one condition or property in the Form of this preſent Earth, that makes it capable of inflammation. 'Tis the manner of its conſtruction, in an hollow cavernous form; By reaſon whereof, containing much Air in its cavities, and having many inlets and outlets, 'tis in moſt places capable

capable of ventilation, pervious and passable to the winds, and consequently to the fire. Those that have read the former part of this Theory, know how the Earth came into this hollow and broken form, from what causes and at what time; namely, at the Universal Deluge; when there was a disruption of the exteriour Earth that fell into the Abyss, and so, for a time, was overflow'd with water. These Ruines recover'd from the water, we inhabit, and these Ruines onely will be burnt up; For being not onely unequal in their Surface, but also hollow, loose, and incompact within, as ruines use to be, they are made thereby capable of a second fate, by inflammation. *Thereby*, I say, they are made combustible; for if the exteriour Regions of this Earth were as close and compact in all their parts, as we have reason to believe the interiour Regions of it to be, the Fire could have little power over it, nor ever reduce it to such a state as is requir'd in a compleat Conflagration, such as ours is to be. *Book 1. ch. 6, 7.*

This being admitted, that the Exteriour region of the Earth stands hollow, as a well set fire, to receive Air freely into its parts, and hath issues for smoke and flame: It remains to enquire what fewel or materials Nature hath fitted to kindle this Pile, and to continue it on fire till it be consum'd; or, in plain words, What are the *natural causes and preparatives for a Conflagration.* The first and most obvious preparations that we see in nature for this effect, are the *Burning Mountains* or Volcano's of the Earth. These are lesser Essays or preludes to the general fire; set on purpose by Providence to keep us awake, and to mind us continually, and forewarn us of what we are to expect at last. The Earth you see is already kindled, blow but the Coal, and propagate the fire, and the work will go on. *Tophet is prepar'd of old*, and when the Day of Doom is come, and the Date of the World expir'd, *the breath of the Lord* shall make it burn. *Isa. 30. 33.*

But besides these Burning Mountains, there are Lakes of pitch and brimstone and oily Liquors disperst in several parts of the Earth. These are to enrage the fire as it goes, and to fortifie it against any resistance

or

or oppoſition. Then all the vegetable productions upon the Surface of the Earth, as Trees, ſhrubs, graſs, corn, and ſuch like; Every thing that grows out of the ground, is fewel for the fire; And tho' they are now accommodated to our uſe and ſervice, they will then turn all againſt us; and with a mighty blaze, and rapid courſe, make a devaſtation of the outward furniture of the Earth, whether natural or artificial. But theſe things deſerve ſome further conſideration, eſpecially that ſtrange Phænomenon of the *Volcano's* or *Burning Mountains*, which we will now conſider more particularly.

There is nothing certainly more terrible in all Nature than Fiery Mountains, to thoſe that live within the view or noiſe of them; but it is not eaſie for us, who never ſee them nor heard them, to repreſent them to our ſelves with ſuch juſt and lively imaginations as ſhall excite in us the ſame paſſions, and the ſame horrour as they would excite, if preſent to our ſenſes. The time of their eruption and of their raging, is, of all others, the moſt dreadful; but, many times, before their eruption, the ſymptomes of an approaching fit are very frightful to the People. The Mountain begins to roar and bellow in its hollow caverns; cries out, as it were, in pain to be deliver'd of ſome burthen, too heavy to be born, and too big to be eaſily diſcharg'd. The Earth ſhakes and trembles, in apprehenſion of the pangs and convulſions that are coming upon her; And the Sun often hides his head, or appears with a diſcolour'd face, pale, or dusky, or bloudy, as if all Nature was to ſuffer in this Agony. After theſe forerunners or ſymptomes of an eruption, the wide jaws of the Mountain open: And firſt, clouds of ſmoke iſſue out, then flames of fire, and after that a mixture of all ſorts of burning matter; red hot ſtones, lumps of metal, half-diſſolv'd minerals, with coals and fiery aſhes. Theſe fall in thick ſhowres round about the Mountain, and in all adjacent parts; and not onely ſo, but are carried, partly by the force of the expulſion, and partly by the winds, when they are aloft in the Air, into far diſtant Countries. As from *Italy* to *Conſtantinople*, and croſs the Mediterranean

Sea into *Africk*; as the beſt Hiſtorians, *Procopius*, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, and *Dion Caſſius*, have atteſted.

Theſe Volcano's are planted in ſeveral regions of the Earth, and in both Continents, This of ours, and the other of *America*. For by report of thoſe that have view'd that new-found World, there are many Mountains in it that belch out Smoke and Fire; ſome conſtantly, and others by fits and intervals. In our Continent Providence hath variouſly diſperſt them, without any rule known to us; but they are generally in Iſlands, or near the Sea. In the Aſiatick Oriental Iſlands they are in great abundance, and Hiſtorians tell us of a Mountain in the Iſland *Java*, that in the year, 1586. at one eruption kill'd ten thouſand people in the neighbouring Cities and Countrey. But we do not know ſo well the Hiſtory of thoſe remote Volcano's, as of ſuch as are in Europe and nearer home. In *Iſeland*, tho' it lye within the Polar circle, and is ſcarce habitable by reaſon of the extremity of cold, and abundance of Ice and Snow, yet there are three burning Mountains in that Iſland; whereof the chief and moſt remarkable is *Hecla*. This hath its head always cover'd with Snow, and its belly always fill'd with Fire; and theſe are both ſo ſtrong in their kind, and equally powerful, that they cannot deſtroy one another. It is ſaid to caſt out, when it rages, beſides earth, ſtones and aſhes, a ſort of flaming water. As if all contrarieties were to meet in this Mountain to make it the more perfect reſemblance of Hell, as the credulous inhabitants fancy it to be.

But there are no Volcano's in my opinion, that deſerve our obſervation ſo much, as thoſe that are in and about the *Mediterranean Sea*; There is a knot of them called the *Vulcanian Iſlands*, from their fiery eruptions, as if they were the Forges of *Vulcan*; as *Stombolo*, *Lipara*, and others, which are not ſo remarkable now as they have been formerly. However, without diſpute, there are none in the Chriſtian World to be compared with *Ætna* and *Veſuvius*; one in the Iſland of *Sicily*, and the other in *Campania*, overlooking the Port and City of *Naples*. Theſe two, from all memory of man and the moſt ancient re-

cords of Hiſtory, have been fam'd for their Treaſures of ſubterraneous Fires: which are not yet exhauſted, nor diminiſh'd, ſo far as is perceivable; for they rage ſtill, upon occaſions, with as much fierceneſs and violence, as they ever did in former Ages; as if they had a continual ſupply to anſwer their expences, and were to ſtand till the laſt fire, as a type and prefiguration of it, throughout all generations.

Let us therefore take theſe two Volcano's as a pattern for the reſt; ſeeing they are well known, and ſtand in the heart of the Chriſtian World, where, 'tis likely, the laſt fire will make its firſt aſſault. *Ætna*, of the two, is more ſpoken of by the ancients, both Poets and Hiſtorians; and we ſhould ſcarce give credit to their relations concerning it, if ſome later eruptions did not equal or exceed the fame of all that hath been reported from former ages. That it heated the waters of the Sea, and cover'd them over with aſhes; crack'd or diſſolv'd the neighbouring Rocks; darkened the Sun and the Air; and caſt out, not only mighty ſtreams of flame, but a floud of melted Ore and other materials; Theſe things we can now believe, having had experience of greater, or an account of them from ſuch as have been eye-witneſſes of theſe fires, or of the freſh ruines and ſad effects of them.

There are two things eſpecially, in theſe Eruptions of *Ætna*, that are moſt prodigious in themſelves and moſt remarkable for our purpoſe. The Rivers of fiery matter that break out of its bowels, or are ſpew'd out of its mouth; and the vaſt burning ſtones which it flings into the Air, at a ſtrange height and diſtance. As to theſe fiery rivers or torrents, and the matter whereof they are compounded, we have a full account of them by *Alphonſus Borellus*, a learned Mathematician at *Piſa*; who, after the laſt great Eruption in the year 1669. went into *Sicily*, while the fact was freſh, to view and ſurvey what *Ætna* had done or ſuffer'd. And he ſays the quantity of matter thrown out of the Mountain at that time, upon ſurvey amounted to Ninety three millions, eight hundred

dred thirty eight thouſand, ſeven hundred and fifty cubical paces. So that if it had been extended in length upon the ſurface of the Earth, at the bredth and depth of 3 foot, it would have reacht further than ninety three millions of paces; which is more than four times the Circuit of the whole Earth, taking a thouſand paces to a mile. This is ſtrange to our imagination and almoſt incredible, that one Mountain ſhould throw out ſo much fiery matter, beſides all the aſhes that were diſperſt through the Air, far and near, and could be brought to no account.

'Tis true, all this matter was not actually inflam'd or liquid fire. But the reſt that was ſand, ſtone and gravel, might have run into glaſs or ſome melted liquor like to it, if it had not been thrown out before the heat fully reacht it. However, ſixty million paces of this matter, as the ſame Author computes, were liquid fire, or came out of the mouth of the pit in that form. This made a River of fire, ſometimes two miles broad, according to his computation; but according to the obſervation of others who alſo viewed it, the Torrent of fire was ſix or ſeven miles broad, and ſometimes ten or fifteen fathoms deep; and forc'd its way into the Sea near a mile, preſerving it ſelf alive in the midſt of the waters.

This is beyond all the infernal Lakes and Rivers, *Acheron*, *Phlegeton*, *Cocytus*, all that the Poets have talkt of. Their greateſt fictions about Hell have not come up to the reality of one of our burning Mountains upon Earth. Imagin then all our *Volcano*'s rageing at once in this manner. ----- But I will not purſue that ſuppoſition yet; Give me leave only to add here what I mentioned in the ſecond place, The vaſt *Burning Stones* which this Mountain, in the time of its rage and eſtuation, threw into the Air with an incredible force. This ſame Author tells us of a ſtone fifteen foot long, that was ſlung out of the mouth of the pit, to a miles diſtance. And when it fell, it came from ſuch an height and with ſuch a violence, that it buried it ſelf in the ground eight foot deep. What trifles are our Mortar-pieces and Bombes, when compar'd with theſe Engines of Nature? When ſhe

flings out of the wide throat of a Volcano, a broken Rock, and twirles it in the air like a little bullet; then lets it fall to do execution here below, as Providence ſhall point and direct it. It would be hard to give an account how ſo great an impulſe can be given to a Body ſo ponderous, But there's no diſputing againſt matter of fact; and as the thoughts of God are not like our thoughts, ſo neither are his works like our works.

Thus much for *Ætna.* Let us now give an inſtance in *Veſuvius*, another *Burning* Mountain upon the coaſt of the Mediterranean, which hath as frequent Eruptions, and ſome as terrible as thoſe of *Ætna.* *Dion Caſſius* (one of the beſt writers of the *Roman* Hiſtory) hath given us an account of one that happened in the time of *Titus Veſpatian*; and tho' he hath not ſet down particulars, as the former Author did, of the quantity of fiery matter thrown out at that time: yet ſuppoſing that proportionable to its fierceneſs in other reſpects, this ſeems to me as dreadful an Eruption as any we read of; and was accompanied with ſuch prodigies and commotions in the Heavens and the Earth, as made it look like the beginning of the laſt Conflagration. As a prelude to this Tragedy, He ſays there were ſtrange ſights in the air, and after that followed an extraordinary drought, *Then the Earth begun to tremble and quake, and the Concuſſions were ſo great that the ground ſeem'd to riſe and boyl up in ſome places, and in others the tops of the mountains ſunk in or tumbled down. At the ſame time were great noiſes and ſounds heard, ſome were ſubterraneous, like thunder within the Earth; others above ground, like groans or bellowings.* The Sea roar'd, *The heavens ratled with a fearful noiſe, and then came a ſudden and mighty crack, as if the frame of Nature had broke, or all the mountains of the Earth had faln down at once. At length* Veſuvius *burſt, and threw out of its womb, firſt, huge ſtones, then a vaſt quantity of fire and ſmoke, ſo as the air was all darkned, and the Sun was hid, as if he had been under a great Eclipſe. The day was turn'd into night, and light into darkneſs; and the frighted people thought the Gyants were making war againſt heaven, and fanſied they ſee the*

lib. 66.

ſhapes

ſhapes and images of Gyants in the ſmoak, and heard the ſound of their trumpets. Others thought the World was returning to its firſt Chaos, or going to be all conſum'd with fire. In this general confuſion and conſternation they knew not where to be ſafe, ſome run out of the fields into the houſes, others out of the houſes into the fields; Thoſe that were at Sea haſten'd to Land, and thoſe that were at Land endeavour'd to get to Sea; ſtill thinking every place ſafer than that where they were. Beſides groſſer lumps of matter, there was thrown out of the Mountain ſuch a prodigious quantity of aſhes, as cover'd the Land and Sea, and fill'd the Air, ſo as, beſides other damages, the Birds, Beaſts, and Fiſhes, with Men, Women and Children, were deſtroy'd, within ſuch a compaſs; and two entire Cities, Herculanium *and* Pompeios, *were overwhelm'd with a ſhowre of aſhes, as the People were ſitting in the Theater. Nay, theſe aſhes were carried* by the winds *over the Mediterranean into Africk, and into Ægypt and Syria. And at* Rome *they choak'd the Air on a ſudden, ſo as to hide the face of the Sun. Whereupon the People, not knowing the cauſe, as not having yet got the News from Campania of the Eruption of Veſuvius, could not imagine what the reaſon ſhould be; but thought the Heavens and the Earth were coming together, The Sun coming down, and the Earth going to take its place above.* Thus far the Hiſtorian.

You ſee what diſorders in nature, and what an alarum, the Eruption of one fiery Mountain is capable to make; Theſe things, no doubt, would have made ſtrong impreſſions upon us, if we had been eye-witneſſes of them; But I know, repreſentations made from dead hiſtory, and at a diſtance, though the teſtimony be never ſo credible, have a much leſs effect upon us than what we ſee our ſelves, and what our ſenſes immediately inform us of. I have onely given you an account of two Volcano's, and of a ſingle Eruption in either of them; Theſe Mountains are not very far diſtant from one another: Let us ſuppoſe two ſuch Eruptions, as I have mention'd, to happen at the ſame time, and both theſe Mountains to be raging at once, in this manner; By that violence you have ſeen in each of them ſingly, you will eaſily imagine what a terrour and deſolation they would carry round about,

by

by a conjunction of their fury and all their effects, in the Air and on the Earth. Then, if to these two, you should joyn two more, the Sphere of their activity would still be enlarg'd, and the Scenes become more dreadful. But, to compleat the supposition, Let us imagine all the Volcano's of the whole Earth, to be prepar'd and set to a certain time; which time being come, and a signal given by Providence, all these Mines begin to play at once; I mean, All these Fiery Mountains burst out, and discharge themselves in flames of fire, tear up the roots of the Earth, throw hot burning stones, send out streams of flowing Metals and Minerals, and all other sorts of ardent matter, which Nature hath lodg'd in those Treasuries. If all these Engines, I say, were to play at once, the Heavens and the Earth would seem to be in a flame, and the World in an universal combustion. But we may reasonably presume, that against that great Day of vengeance and execution, not onely all these will be employ'd, but also new Volcano's will be open'd, and new Mountains in every Region will break out into smoke and flame; just as at the Deluge, the Abyss broke out from the Womb of the Earth, and from those hidden stores sent an immense quantity of water, which, it may be, the Inhabitants of that World never thought of before. So we must expect new Eruptions, and also new sulphureous Lakes and Fountains of Oyl, to boyl out of the ground; And these all united with that Fewel that naturally grows upon the Surface of the Earth, will be sufficient to give the first onset, and to lay wast all the habitable World, and the Furniture of it.

But we suppose the Conflagration will go lower, pierce under-ground, and dissolve the substance of the Earth to some considerable depth; therefore besides these outward and visible preparations, we must consider all the hidden invisible Materials within the Veins of the Earth; Such are all Minerals or Mineral juices and concretions that are igniferous, or capable of inflammation; And these cannot easily be reckon'd up or estimated. Some of the most common are, Sulphur, and all sulphureous bodies, and Earths impreg-

impregnated with Sulphur, Bitumen and bituminous concretions; inflammable Salts, Coal and other foſſiles that are ardent, with innumerable mixtures and compoſitions of theſe kinds, which being open'd by heat, are unctuous and inflammable; or by attrition diſcover the latent ſeeds of fire. But beſides conſiſtent Bodies, there is alſo much volatile fire within the Earth, in fumes, ſteams, and exudations, which will all contribute to this effect. From theſe ſtores under-ground all Plants and Vegetables are fed and ſupply'd, as to their oily and ſulphureous parts; And all hot Waters in Baths or Fountains, muſt have their original from ſome of theſe, ſome mixture or participation of them. And as to the *Britiſh* Soyl, there is ſo much Coal incorporated with it, that when the Earth ſhall burn, we have reaſon to apprehend no ſmall danger from that ſubterraneous Enemy.

Theſe diſpoſitions, and this Fewel we find, in and upon the Earth, towards the laſt Fire. The third ſort of Proviſion is in the Air; All fiery Meteors and Exhalations engender'd and form'd in thoſe Regions above, and diſcharg'd upon the Earth in ſeveral ways. I believe there were no fiery Meteors in the ante-diluvian Heavens; which therefore St. *Peter* ſays, *were conſtituted of water*; had nothing in them but what was watery. But he ſays, *the Heavens that are now* have treaſures of fire, or are reſerv'd for fire, as things laid up in a ſtore-houſe for that purpoſe. We have thunder and lightning, and fiery tempeſts, and there is nothing more vehement, impetuous, and irreſiſtible, where their force is directed. It ſeems to me very remarkable, that the Holy Writers deſcribe the *coming of the Lord*, and the deſtruction of the wicked, in the nature of a tempeſt, or a ſtorm of fire. *Upon the wicked the Lord ſhall rain coals, fire and brimſtone, and a burning tempeſt, this ſhall be the portion of their cup.* And in the lofty Song of *David* (*Pſal.* 18.) which, in my judgment, reſpects both the paſt Deluge and the future Conflagration, 'tis ſaid, *The Lord alſo thundred in the heavens, and the Higheſt gave his voice, hail-ſtones and coals of fire. Yea, he ſent forth his arrows and ſcattered them, and he ſhot out lightnings and diſcomfited them. Then the* *Pſal.* 11. 6.

ver. 13, 14, 15.

Chanels

Chanels of waters were ſeen, and the foundations of the World were diſcover'd; at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blaſt of the breath of thy noſtrils. And a like fiery coming is deſcrib'd in the ninety ſeventh Pſalm, as alſo by *Iſaiah*, *Daniel*, and S. *Paul*. And laſtly, in the *Apocalypſe*, when the World draws to a concluſion, as in the ſeventh Trumpet (ch. 11. 19.) and the ſeventh Vial (ch. 16. 18.) we have ſtill mention made of this Fiery Tempeſt of Lightnings and Thunderings.

Iſa. 66. 15. *Dan.* 7. 9, 10. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8.

We may therefore reaſonably ſuppoſe, that, before the Conflagration, the air will be ſurcharg'd every where, (by a precedent drought) with hot and fiery exhalations; And as againſt the Deluge, thoſe regions were burthened with water and moiſt vapours, which were pour'd upon the Earth, not in gentle ſhowres, but like rivers and cataracts from Heaven; ſo they will now be fill'd with hot fumes and ſulphureous clouds, which will ſometimes flow in ſtreams and fiery impreſſions through the Air, ſometimes make Thunder and Lightnings, and ſometimes fall down upon the Earth in flouds of Fire. In general, there is a great analogy to be obſerved betwixt the two Deluges, of Water and of Fire; not only as to the bounds of them, which were noted before; but as to the general cauſes and ſources upon which they depend, from above and from below. At the Floud, the windows of Heaven were opened above, and the Abyſs was opened below; and the Waters of theſe two joyn'd together to overflow the World. In like manner, at the Conflagration, God will rain down Fire from Heaven, as he did once upon *Sodom*; and at the ſame time the ſubterraneous ſtore-houſes of Fire will be broken open, which anſwers to the diſruption of the Abyſs: And theſe two meeting and mingling together, will involve all the Heaven and Earth in flames.

This is a ſhort account of the ordinary ſtores of Nature, and the ordinary preparations for a general Fire; And in contemplation of theſe, *Pliny* the Naturaliſt, ſaid boldly, *It was one of the greateſt wonders of the World, that the World was not every day ſet on fire.* We will conclude this Chapter with his words, in the

the ſecond Book of his *Natural Hiſtory*; having given an account of ſome fiery Mountains, and other parts of the Earth that are the ſeats and ſources of Fire, He makes this reflection; *Seeing this Element is ſo fruitful that it brings forth it ſelf, and multiplies and encreaſes from the leaſt ſparks, what are we to expect from ſo many fires already kindled on the Earth? How does nature feed and ſatisfie ſo devouring an Element, and ſuch a great voracity throughout all the World, without loſs or diminution of her ſelf? Add to theſe fires we have mentioned, the Stars and the Great Sun, then all the fires made for humane uſes; fire in ſtones, in wood, in the clouds and in thunder; IT EXCEEDS ALL MIRACLES, IN MY OPINION, THAT ONE DAY SHOULD PASS WITHOUT SETTING THE WORLD ALL ON FIRE.* ch. 106, 107.

CHAP. VIII.

Some new diſpoſitions towards the Conflagration, as to the matter, form, and ſituation of the Earth. Concerning miraculous Cauſes, and how far the miniſtery of Angels may be engaged in this Work.

WE have given an account, in the preceding Chapter, of the ordinary preparations of Nature for a general fire; We now are to give an account of the extraordinary, or of any new diſpoſitions, which towards the end of the World, may be ſuperadded to the ordinary ſtate of Nature. I do not, by theſe, mean things openly miraculous and ſupernatural, but ſuch a change wrought in Nature as ſhall ſtill have the face of Natural Cauſes, and yet have a greater tendency to the Conflagration. As for example, ſuppoſe a great Drought, as we noted before, to precede this fate, or a general heat and

dryneſs of the air and of the Earth; becauſe this happens ſometimes in a courſe of Nature, it will not be lookt upon as prodigious. 'Tis true, ſome of the Ancients ſpeak of a Drought of Forty Years, that will be a forerunner of the Conflagration, ſo that there will not be a watery Cloud, nor a Rainbow ſeen in the Heavens, for ſo long time. And this they impute to *Elias*, who, at his coming, will ſtop the Rain and ſhut up the Heavens, to make way for the laſt Fire. But theſe are exceſſive and ill-grounded ſuppoſitions, for half forty years drought will bring an univerſal ſterility upon the Earth, and thereupon an univerſal Famine, with innumerable diſeaſes; ſo that all mankind would be deſtroyed before the Conflagration could overtake them.

But we will readily admit an extraordinary drought and deſiccation of all bodies to uſher in this great fatality. And therefore whatſoever we read in Natural Hiſtory concerning former droughts, of their drying up fountains and rivers, parching the Earth and making the outward Turf take fire in ſeveral places; filling the air with fiery impreſſions, making the Woods and Foreſts ready fewel, and ſometimes to kindle by the heat of the Sun or a flaſh of Lightning: Theſe and what other effects have come to paſs in former droughts, may come to paſs again; and that in an higher meaſure, and ſo as to be of more general extent. And we muſt alſo allow, that by this means, a great degree of inflammability, or eaſineſs to be ſet on Fire, will be ſuperinduc'd, both into the body of the Earth, and of all things that grow upon it. The heat of the Sun will pierce deeper into its bowels, when it gapes to receive his beams, and by chinks and widened pores makes way for their paſſage to its very heart. And, on the other hand, it is not improbable, but that upon this general relaxation and incaleſcency of the Body of the Earth, the *Central Fire* may have a freer efflux, and diffuſe it ſelf in greater abundance every way; ſo as to affect even theſe exteriour regions of the Earth, ſo far, as to make them ſtill more catching and more combuſtible.

From this external and internal heat acting upon the Body of the Earth, all Minerals that have the ſeeds of fire in them, will be open'd, and exhale their effluvium's more copiouſly: As Spices, when warm'd, are more odoriferous, and fill the Air with their perfumes; ſo the particles of fire, that are ſhut up in ſeveral bodies, will eaſily flie abroad, when by a further degree of relaxation you ſhake off their chains, and open the Priſon-doors. We cannot doubt, but there are many ſorts of Minerals, and many ſorts of Fire-ſtones, and of Trees and Vegetables of this nature, which will ſweat out their oily and ſulphureous atomes, when by a general heat and drineſs their parts are looſen'd and agitated.

We have no experience that will reach ſo far, as to give us a full account what the ſtate of Nature will be at that time; I mean, after this drought, towards the end of the world; But we may help our imagination, by comparing it with other ſeaſons and temperaments of the Air. As therefore in the Spring the Earth is fragrant, and the Fields and Gardens are fill'd with the ſweet breathings of Herbs and Flowers; eſpecially after a gentle rain, when their Bodies are ſoften'd, and the warmth of the Sun makes them evaporate more freely; So a greater degree of heat acting upon all the bodies of the Earth, like a ſtronger fire in the Alembick, will extract another ſort of parts or particles, more deeply incorporated and more difficult to be diſintangled; I mean oily parts, and ſuch undiſcover'd parcels of fire, as lie fix'd and impriſon'd in hard bodies. Theſe, I imagine, will be in a great meaſure ſet a-float, or drawn out into the Air, which will abound with hot and dry Exhalations, more than with vapours and moiſture in a wet ſeaſon; and by this means, all Elements and elementary Bodies will ſtand ready, and in a proximate diſpoſition to be inflam'd.

Thus much concerning the laſt drought, and the general effects of it. In the next place, we muſt conſider the Earth-quakes that will precede the Conflagration, and the conſequences of them. I noted before, that the cavernous and broken conſtruction of

the preſent Earth, was that which made it obnoxious to be deſtroy'd by fire; as its former conſtruction over the Abyſs, made it obnoxious to be deſtroy'd with Water. This hollowneſs of the Earth is moſt ſenſible in mountainous and hilly Countreys, which therefore I look upon as moſt ſubject to burning; but the plain Countreys may alſo be made hollow and hilly by Earth-quakes; when the vapours not finding an eaſie vent, raiſe the ground and make a forcible eruption, as at the ſpringing of a Mine. And tho' plain Countreys are not ſo ſubject to Earth-quakes as mountainous, becauſe they have not ſo many cavities and ſubterraneous vaults to lodge the vapours in; yet every Region hath more or leſs of them: And after this drought, the vacuities of the Earth being every where enlarg'd, the quantity of exhalations much increas'd, and the motion of them more ſtrong and violent, they will have their effects in many places where they never had any before. Yet I do not ſuppoſe that this will raiſe new ridges of Mountains, like the *Alpes* or *Pyreneans*, in thoſe Countreys that are now plain, but that they will break and looſen the ground, make greater inequalities in the ſurface, and greater cavities within, than what are at preſent in thoſe places; And by this means, the fire will creep under them, and find a paſſage thorough them, with more eaſe, than if they were compact, and every where continued and unbroken.

But you will ſay, it may be, how does it appear, that there will be more frequent Earth-quakes towards the end of the World? If this precedent drought be admitted, 'tis plain that fiery exhalations will abound every where within the Earth, and will have a greater agitation than ordinary; and theſe being the cauſes of Earth-quakes, when they are rarified or inflam'd, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe that in ſuch a ſtate of nature, they will more frequently happen, than at other times. Beſides, Earth-quakes are taken notice of in Scripture, as ſigns and forerunners of the laſt day, as they uſually are of all great changes and calamities. The deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* was a type of the deſtruction of the World, and the Evangeliſts always men-

tion

tion Earth-quakes amongſt the ominous Prodigies that were to attend it. But theſe Earth-quakes we are ſpeaking of at preſent, are but the beginnings of ſorrow, and not to be compar'd with thoſe that will follow afterwards, when Nature is convulſt in her laſt agony, juſt as the flames are ſeizing on her. Of which we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter.

Theſe changes will happen as to the *matter* and *form* of the Earth, before it is attack't by the laſt fire; There will be alſo another change as to the *ſituation* of it; for that will be rectified, and the Earth reſtor'd to the poſture it had at firſt, namely, of a right aſpect and converſion to the Sun. But becauſe I cannot determine at what time this reſtitution will be, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of the Conflagration, I will not preſume to lay any ſtreſs upon it. *Plato* ſeems to have imputed the Conflagration to this only; which is ſo far true, that the Revolution call'd *The Great Year*, is this very Revolution, or the Return of the Earth and the Heavens to their firſt poſture. But tho' this may be contemporary with the laſt fire, or ſome way concomitant; yet it does not follow that it is the cauſe of it, much leſs the onely cauſe. It may be an occaſion of making the fire reach more eaſily towards the Poles, when by this change of ſituation, their long Nights and long Winters ſhall be taken away.

Theſe new diſpoſitions in our Earth which we expect before that great day, may be look'd upon as extraordinary, but not as miraculous, becauſe they may proceed from natural cauſes. But now in the laſt place, we are to conſider *miraculous cauſes*: What influence they may have, or what part they may bear, in this great revolution of nature. By *miraculous* cauſes we underſtand either God's immediate omnipotency, or the Miniſtery of Angels; And what may be perform'd by the latter, is very improperly and undecently thrown upon the former. 'Tis a great ſtep to Omnipotency: and 'tis hard to define what miracles, on this ſide Creation, require an infinite power. We are ſure that the Angels are miniſtring Spirits, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtand about the Throne

of

of the Almighty, to receive his commands and execute his judgments. That perfect knowledge they have of the powers of nature, and of conducting those powers to the best advantage, by adjusting causes in a fit subordination one to another, makes them capable of performing, not onely things far above our force, but even above our imagination. Besides, they have a radical inherent power, belonging to the excellency of their nature, of determining the motions of matter, within a far greater sphere than humane Souls can pretend to. We can onely command our spirits, and determine their motions within the compass of our own Bodies; but their activity and empire is of far greater extent, and the outward World is much more subject to their dominion than to ours. From these considerations it is reasonable to conclude, that the generality of miracles may be and are perform'd by Angels; It being less decorous to employ a Sovereign power, where a subaltern is sufficient, and when we hastily cast things upon God, for quick dispatch, we consult our own ease more than the honour of our Maker.

I take it for granted here, that what is done by an Angelical hand, is truly providential, and of divine administration; and also justly bears the character of a miracle. Whatsoever may be done by pure material causes, or humane strength, we account Natural; and whatsoever is above these we call supernatural and miraculous. Now what is supernatural and miraculous is either the effect of an Angelical power, or of a Sovereign and Infinite power. And we ought not to confound these two, no more than Natural and Supernatural; for there is a greater difference betwixt the highest Angelical power and Omnipotency, than betwixt an Humane power and Angelical. Therefore as the first Rule concerning miracles is this, That we must not flie to miracles, where Man and Nature are sufficient; so the second Rule is this, that we must not flie to a sovereign infinite power, where an Angelical is sufficient. And the reason in both Rules is the same, namely, because it argues a defect of Wisdom in all Oeconomies to employ more and greater means than are sufficient.

Now

Now to make application of this to our preſent purpoſe, I think it reaſonable, and alſo ſufficient, to admit the miniſtery of Angels in the future Conflagration of the World. If Nature will not lay violent hands upon her ſelf, or is not ſufficient to work her own deſtruction, Let us allow *Deſtroying Angels* to intereſt themſelves in the work, as the Executioners of the Divine Juſtice and Vengeance upon a degenerate World. We have examples of this ſo frequently in Sacred Hiſtory, how the Angels have executed God's Judgments upon a Nation or a People, that it cannot ſeem new or ſtrange, that in this laſt judgment, which by all the Prophets is repreſented as the *Great Day of the Lord*, the day of his Wrath and of his Fury, the ſame Angels ſhould bear their parts, and conclude the laſt ſcene of that Tragedy which they had acted in all along. We read of the *Deſtroying Angel* in *Ægypt*; of Angels that preſided at the deſtruction of *Sodom*, which was a Type of the future deſtruction of the World, (*Jude* 7.) and of Angels that will accompany our Saviour when he comes in flames of Fire: Not, we ſuppoſe, to be Spectators only, but Actors and Superintendents in this great Cataſtrophe.

Gen. 12. 23.
Gen. 19. 13.
2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7, 8.

This miniſtery of Angels may be either in ordering and conducting ſuch Natural Cauſes as we have already given an account of, or in adding new ones, if occaſion be; I mean, encreaſing the quantity of Fire, or of fiery materials, in and about the Earth. So as that Element ſhall be more abundant and more predominant, and overbear all oppoſition that either Water, or any other Body, can make againſt it. It is not material whether of theſe two Suppoſitions we follow, provided we allow that the Conflagration is a work of Providence, and not a pure Natural Fatality. If it be neceſſary that there ſhould be an augmentation made of Fiery Matter, 'tis not hard to conceive how that may be done, either from the Heavens or from the Earth. The Prophets ſometimes ſpeak of multiplying or ſtrengthning the Light of the Sun, and it may as eaſily be conceiv'd of his heat as of his light; as if the Vial that was to be

Iſa. 30. 26.

pour'd

Rev. 26. 8. pour'd upon it, and *gave it a power to ſcorch men with fire*, had ſomething of a Natural ſence as well as Moral. But there is another ſtream of Ethereal matter that flows from the Heavens, and recruits the *Central Fire* with continual ſupplies; This may be encreas'd and ſtrengthned, and its effects convey'd throughout the whole Body of the Earth.

But if an augmentation is to be made of Terreſtrial Fire, or of ſuch terreſtrial principles as contain it moſt, as Sulphur, Oyl, and ſuch like, I am apt to believe, theſe will encreaſe of their own accord, upon a general drought and deſiccation of the Earth. For I am far from the opinion of ſome Chymiſts, that think theſe principles immutable, and incapable of diminution or augmentation. I willingly admit that all ſuch particles may be broken and disfigur'd, and thereby loſe their proper and ſpecifick virtue, and new ones may be generated to ſupply the places of the former. Which ſupplies, or new productions being made in a leſs or greater meaſure, according to the general diſpoſitions of Nature; when Nature is heightned into a kind of Feaver and Ebullition of all her juices and humours, as ſhe will be at that time, we muſt expect that more parts than ordinary, ſhould be made inflammable, and thoſe that are inflam'd ſhould become more violent. Under theſe circumſtances, when all Cauſes lean that way, a little help from a ſuperiour power will have a great effect, and make a great change in the ſtate of the World. And as to the power of Angels, I am of opinion that it is very great as to the Changes and Modifications of Natural Bodies; that they can diſſolve a Marble as eaſily as we can crumble Earth and Moulds, or fix any liquor, in a moment, into a ſubſtance as hard as Cryſtal. That they can either make flames more vehement and irreſiſtible to all ſorts of Bodies; or as harmleſs as Lambent Fires, and as ſoft as Oyl. We

Dan. 3. 28. ſee an inſtance of this laſt, in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s fiery Furnace, where the three Children walk'd unconcern'd in the midſt of the Flames, under the charge and protection of an Angel. And the ſame Angel, if he had pleas'd, could have made the ſame Furnace

ſeven

ſeven times hotter than the wrath of the Tyrant had made it.

We will therefore leave it to their miniſtery to manage this great Furnace, when the Heavens and the Earth are on Fire. To conſerve, encreaſe, direct, or temper the flames, according to inſtructions given them, as they are to be *Tutelary* or *Deſtroying*. Neither let any body think it a diminution of Providence to put things into the hands of Angels; 'Tis the true rule and method of it; For to employ an Almighty power where it is not neceſſary, is to debaſe it, and give it a task fit for lower Beings. Some think it devotion and piety to have recourſe immediately to the arm of God to ſalve all things; This may be done ſometimes with a good intention, but commonly with little judgment. God is as jealous of the glory of his Wiſdom, as of his Power; and Wiſdom conſiſts in the conduct and ſubordination of ſeveral cauſes to bring our purpoſes to effect; but what is diſpatched by an immediate Supreme Power, leaves no room for the exerciſe of Wiſdom. To conclude this point, which I have touch'd upon more than once, We muſt not be partial to any of God's Attributes, and Providence being a complexion of many, Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs, when we give due place and honour to all theſe, then we moſt honour DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

CHAP. IX.

How the Sea will be diminiſh'd and conſum'd. How the Rocks and Mountains will be thrown down and melted, and the whole exteriour frame of the Earth diſſolv'd into a Deluge of Fire.

WE have now taken a view of the Cauſes of the Conflagration, both ordinary and extraordinary: It remains to conſider the manner of it; How theſe Cauſes will operate, and bring to paſs an effect ſo great and ſo prodigious. We took notice before that the grand obſtruction would be from the Sea, and from the Mountains; we muſt therefore take theſe to task in the firſt place; and if we can remove them out of our way, or overcome what reſiſtance and oppoſition they are capable to make, the reſt of the work will not be uneaſie to us.

The Ocean indeed is a vaſt Body of Waters; and we muſt uſe all our art and skill to dry it up, or conſume it in a good meaſure, before we can compaſs our deſign. I remember the advice a Philoſopher gave *Amaſis* King of *Egypt*, when he had a command ſent him from the King of *Æthiopia*, *That he ſhould drink up the Sea.* *Amaſis* being very anxious and ſollicitous what anſwer he ſhould make to this ſtrange command, the Philoſopher *Bias* advis'd him to make this round anſwer to the King; *That he was ready to perform his command and to drink up the Sea, provided he would ſtop the rivers from flowing into his cup while he was drinking.* This anſwer baffled the King, for he could not ſtop the rivers; but this we muſt do, or we ſhall never be able to drink up the Sea, or burn up the Earth.

Neither will this be ſo impoſſible as it ſeems at firſt ſight, if we reflect upon thoſe preparations we have made towards it, by a general drought all over the Earth. This we ſuppoſe will precede the Conflagra-

flagration, and by drying up the Fountains and Rivers, which daily feed the Sea, will by degrees ſtarve that Monſter, or reduce it to ſuch a degree of weakneſs, that it ſhall not be able to make any great reſiſtance. More than half an Ocean of Water flows into the Sea every day, from the Rivers of the Earth, if you take them all together. This I ſpeak upon a moderate computation. *Ariſtotle* ſays the Rivers carry more water into the Sea, in the ſpace of a year, than would equal in bulk the whole Globe of the Earth. Nay ſome have ventur'd to affirm this of one ſingle River, The *Volga*, that runs into the *Caſpian* Sea. 'Tis a great River indeed, and hath ſeventy mouths; and ſo it had need have, to diſgorge a maſs of Water equal to the Body of the Earth, in a years time. But we need not take ſuch high meaſures; There are at leaſt an hundred great Rivers that flow into the Sea, from ſeveral parts of the Earth, Iſlands and Continents, beſides ſeveral thouſands of leſſer ones; Let us ſuppoſe theſe,all together, to pour as much water into the Sea-chanel, every day, as is equal to half the Ocean. And we ſhall be eaſily convinc'd of the reaſonableneſs of this ſuppoſition, if we do but examine the daily expence of one River, and by that make an eſtimate of the reſt. This we find calculated to our hands in the *River Po* in *Italy*; a River of much what the ſame bigneſs with our *Thames*, and disburthens it ſelf into the Gulph of *Venice*. *Baptiſta Riccioli* hath computed how much water this River diſcharges in an hour,*viz.* 18000 000. cubical paces of Water, and conſequently 432000000. in a day; which is ſcarce credible to thoſe that do not diſtinctly compute it. Suppoſe then an hundred Rivers as great as this or greater, to fall into the Sea from the land; beſides thouſands of leſſer, that pay their tribute at the ſame time into the great Receit of the Ocean; Theſe all taken together, are capable to renew the Sea every twice four and twenty hours. Which ſuppoſitions being admitted, if by a great and laſting drought theſe Rivers were dryed up, or the Fountains from whence they flow, what would then become of that vaſt Ocean, that before was ſo formidable to us?

'Tis likely you will ſay, Theſe great Rivers cannot be dry'd up, tho' the little ones may; and therefore we muſt not ſuppoſe ſuch an Univerſal ſtop of waters, or that they will all fail, by any drought whatſoever. But great Rivers being made up of little ones, if theſe fail, thoſe muſt be diminiſh'd, if not quite drain'd and exhauſted. It may be all Fountains and Springs do not proceed from the ſame cauſes, or the ſame original; and ſome are much more copious than others; for ſuch differences we will allow what is due; but ſtill the drineſs of the Air and of the Earth continuing, and all the ſources and ſupplies of moiſture, both from above and from below, being leſſen'd or wholly diſcontinued, a general decay of all Fountains and Rivers muſt neceſſarily follow, and conſequently of the Sea, and of its fulneſs that depends upon them. And that's enough for our preſent purpoſe.

The firſt ſtep therefore towards the Conſumption of the Ocean will be the diminution or ſuſpenſion of the Rivers that run into it. The next will be an Evacuation by Subterraneous paſſages; And the laſt, by Eruptions of fires in the very Chanel of it, and in the midſt of the waters. As for Subterraneous evacuations, we cannot doubt but that the Sea hath out-lets at the bottom of it; whereby it diſcharges that vaſt quantity of water that flows into it every day, and that could not be diſcharg'd ſo faſt as it comes from the wide mouths of the Rivers, by percolation or ſtraining thorough the Sands. Seas alſo communicate with one another by theſe internal paſſages; as is manifeſt from thoſe particular Seas that have no external outlet or iſſue, tho' they receive into them many great Rivers, and ſometimes the influx of other Seas. So the *Caſpian* Sea receives not onely *Volga*, which we mention'd before, but ſeveral other Rivers, and yet hath no viſible iſſue for its waters. The *Mediterranean* Sea, beſides all the Rivers it receives, hath a current flowing into it, at either end, from other Seas; from the *Atlantick* Ocean at the ſtreights of *Gibraltar*, and from the Black Sea, above *Conſtantinople:* and yet there is no paſſage above-ground, or viſible derivation of the *Miditerranean* waters out of their Chanel; which ſeeing

ing they do not overfill, nor overflow the Banks, 'tis certain they must have some secret conveyances into the bowels of the Earth, or subterraneous communication with other Seas. Lastly, from the Whirl-pools of the Sea, that suck in Bodies that come within their reach, it seems plainly to appear, by that attraction and absorption, that there is a descent of waters in those places.

Wherefore when the current of the Rivers into the Sea is stopt, or in a great measure diminish'd; The Sea continuing to empty it self by these subterraneous passages, and having little or none of those supplies that it us'd to have from the Land, it must needs be sensibly lessen'd; and both contract its Chanel into a narrower compass, and also have less depth in the waters that remain. And in the last place, we must expect fiery eruptions in several parts of the Sea-chanel, which will help to suck up or evaporate the remaining waters. In the present state of Nature there have been several instances of such eruptions of fire from the bottom of the Sea; and in that last state of Nature, when all things are in a tendency to inflammation, and when Earth-quakes and Eruptions will be more frequent every where, we must expect them also more frequently by Sea, as well as by Land. 'Tis true, neither Earth-quakes nor Eruptions can happen in the middle of the Great Ocean, or in the deepest Abyss, because there are no cavities, or mines below it, for the vapours and exhalations to lodge in; But 'tis not much of the Sea-chanel that is so deep, and in other parts, especially in streights and near Islands, such Eruptions, like Sea-Volcano's, have frequently happen'd, and new Islands have been made by such fiery matter thrown up from the bottom of the Sea. Thus, they say, those Islands in the Mediterranean call'd the *Vulcanian* Islands, had their original; being matter cast up from the bottom of the Sea, by the force of fire; as new Mountains sometimes are rais'd upon the Earth. Another Island in the *Archipelago* had the same original, whereof *Strabo* gives an account. The *flames*, he says, *sprung up thorough the waters, four days together, so as the whole Sea was hot and burning; and* *l. 1.*

they

they rais'd by degrees, as with Engines, a maſs of Earth, which made a new Iſland, twelve furlongs in compaſs. And in the ſame *Archipelago*, flames and ſmoak have ſeveral times (particularly in the year 1650.) riſe out of the Sea, and fill'd the Air with ſulphureous ſcents and vapours. In like manner, in the Iſland of St. *Michel*, one of the *Tercera's*, there have been, of later years, ſuch eructations of fire and flames; ſo ſtrong and violent, that, at the depth of an hundred and ſixty fathoms, they forc'd their way through the midſt of the waters, from the bottom of the Sea into the open Air. As has been related by thoſe that were eye-witneſſes.

In theſe three ways, I conceive, the great force of the Sea will be broken, and the mighty Ocean reduc'd to a ſtanding Pool of putrid waters, without vent and without recruits. But there will ſtill remain in the midſt of the Chanel a great maſs of troubled liquors, like dregs in the bottom of the veſſel; which will not be drunk up till the Earth be all on fire, and torrents of melted and ſulphureous matter flow from the Land, and mingle with this Dead Sea. But let us now leave the Sea in this humble poſture, and go on to attack the Rocks and Mountains which ſtand next in our way.

See how ſcornfully they look down upon us, and bid defiance to all the Elements. They have born the thunder and lightning of Heaven, and all the artillery of the Skies, for innumerable Ages; and do not fear the crackling of thorns and of ſhrubs that burn at their feet. Let the Towns and Cities of the Earth, ſay they, be laid in aſhes; Let the Woods and Foreſts blaze away; and the fat Soyl of the Earth fry in its own greaſe; Theſe things will not affect us; We can ſtand naked in the midſt of a Sea of fire, with our roots as deep as the foundations of the Earth, and our heads above the Clouds of the Air. Thus they proudly defie Nature; and it muſt be confeſt, that theſe, being, as it were, the Bones of the Earth, when the Body is burning, will be the laſt conſum'd; And I am apt to think, if they could keep in the ſame poſture they ſtand in now, and preſerve themſelves from falling, the fire could never get an entire power over them.

them. But Mountains are generally hollow, and that makes them ſubject to a double caſualty; firſt, of Earth-quakes, ſecondly, of having their roots eaten away by water or by fire; but by fire eſpecially in this caſe: for we ſuppoſe there will be innumerable ſubterraneous fires ſmothering under ground, before the general fire breaks out; and theſe by corroding the bowels of the Earth, will make it more hollow and more ruinous; And when the Earth is ſo far diſſolv'd, that the cavities within the Mountains are fill'd with Lakes of fire, then the Mountains will ſink, and fall into thoſe boyling Caldrons; which, in time, will diſſolve them, tho' they were as hard as Adamant.

To conclude this point, the Mountains will all be brought low, in that ſtate of nature, either by Earth-quakes or ſubterraneous fires; *Every valley ſhall be exalted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be made low.* Which will be literally true at the ſecond coming of our Saviour, as it was figuratively apply'd to his firſt coming. Now, being once level'd with the reſt of the Earth, the queſtion will onely be, how they ſhall be diſſolv'd. But there is no Terreſtrial Body indiſſolvable to Fire, if it have a due ſtrength and continuance; and this laſt fire will have both, in the higheſt degrees; So that it cannot but be capable of diſſolving all Elementary compoſitions, how hard or ſolid ſoever they be.

Iſa. 40. 4.

Luk. 3. 5.

'Tis true, theſe Mountains and Rocks, as I ſaid before, will have the priviledge to be the laſt deſtroy'd. Theſe, with the deep parts of the Sea, and the Polar regions of the Earth, will undergo a ſlower fate, and be conſum'd more leiſurely. The action of the laſt Fire may be diſtinguiſh'd into two Times, or two aſſaults; The firſt aſſault will carry off all Mankind, and all the works of the Earth that are eaſily combuſtible; and this will be done with a quick and ſudden motion. But the ſecond aſſault, being employ'd about the conſumption of ſuch Bodies or ſuch Materials as are not ſo eaſily ſubjected to fire, will be of long continuance, and the work of ſome years. And 'tis fit it ſhould be ſo; that this Flaming World may be view'd and conſider'd by the neighbouring Worlds about it, as a

dreadful

dreadful ſpectacle, and monument of God's wrath againſt diſloyal and diſobedient Creatures. That by this example, now before their eyes, they may think of their own fate, and what may befal them, as well as another Planet of the ſame Elements and compoſition.

Thus much for the Rocks and Mountains; which, you ſee, accordiug to our Hypotheſis, will be level'd, and the whole face of the Earth reduc'd to plainneſs and equality; nay, which is more, melted and diſſolved into a Sea of liquid Fire. And becauſe this may ſeem a Paradox, being more than is uſually ſuppoſed, or taken notice of, in the doctrine of the Conflagration, it will not be improper in this place to give an account, wherein our Idea of the Conflagration and its effects, differs from the common opinion and the uſual repreſentation of it. 'Tis commonly ſuppos'd, that the Conflagration of the World is like the burning of a City, where the Walls and materials of the Houſes are not melted down, but ſcorch'd, inflam'd, demoliſh'd, and made unhabitable. So they think in the Burning of the World, ſuch Bodies, or ſuch parts of Nature, as are fit Fewel for the Fire, will be inflam'd, and, it may be, conſum'd, or reduc'd to ſmoak and aſhes; But other Bodies that are not capable of Inflammation, will only be ſcorch'd and defac'd, the beauty and furniture of the Earth ſpoil'd, and by that means, ſay they, it will be laid waſt and become unhabitable. This ſeems to me a very ſhort and imperfect Idea of the Conflagration; neither agreeable to Scripture, nor to the deductions that may be made from Scripture. We therefore ſuppoſe that this is but half the work, this deſtroying of the outward garniture of the Earth is but the firſt onſet, and that the Conflagration will end in a Diſſolution and liquefaction of the Elements and all the exteriour region of the Earth; ſo as to become a true Deluge of Fire, or a Sea of Fire overſpreading the whole Globe of the Earth. This ſtate of the Conflagration I think may be plainly prov'd, partly by the expreſſions of Scripture concerning it, and partly from the *Renovation*

of

of the Earth that is to follow upon it. St. *Peter*, who is our chief Guide in the doctrine of the Conflagration, says, *The Elements will be melted with fervent heat*; besides burning up the works of the Earth. Then adds, *Seeing all these things shall be dissolv'd, &c.* These terms of *Liquefaction* and *Dissolution* cannot, without violence, be restrained to simple devastation and superficial scorching. Such expressions carry the work a great deal further, even to that full sence which we propose. Besides, the Prophets often speak of the melting of the Earth, or of the hills and mountains, at the presence of the Lord, in the day of his wrath. And S. *John* (*Apoc.* 15. 2.) tells us of a *Sea of Glass, mingled with Fire*; where the Saints stood, singing the song of *Moses*, and triumphing over their enemies, the Spiritual *Pharaoh* and his host, that were swallowed up in it. That *Sea of Glass* must be a Sea of *molten* glass; it must be fluid, not solid, if a Sea; neither can a solid substance be said to be *mingled with Fire*, as this was. And to this answers the *Lake of fire and brimstone*, which the Beast and false Prophet were thrown into alive, *Apoc.* 19. 20. These all refer to the end of the World and the last Fire, and also plainly imply, or express rather, that state of Liquefaction which we suppose and assert.

2 *Pet.* 3. 10, 11.

Isa. 34. 3, 4. & 44. 1, 2. *Nah.* 1. 5. *Ps.* 97. 5.

Furthermore, The *Renovation* of the World, or *The New Heavens* and *New Earth*, which S. *Peter*, out of the Prophets, tells us shall spring out of these that are burnt and dissolved, do suppose this Earth reduc'd into a fluid Chaos, that it may lay a foundation for a second World. If you take such a Skeleton of an Earth, as your scorching Fire would leave behind it; where the flesh is torn from the bones, and the Rocks and Mountains stand naked and staring upon you; the Sea, half empty, gaping at the Sun, and the Cities all in ruines and in rubbish; How would you raise a New World from this? and a World fit to be an *habitation for the Righteous*; for so S. *Peter* makes that to be, which is to succeed after the Conflagration. And a World also *without a Sea*, so S. *John* describes the New Earth he saw. As these characters do not agree to the present Earth,

2 *Pet.* 3. 13.

Apoc. 21. 1.

ſo neither would they agree to *your* Future one; for if that dead lump could revive and become habitable again, it would however retain all the imperfections of the former Earth, beſides ſome ſcars and deformities of its own. Wherefore if you would caſt the Earth into a new and better mould, you muſt firſt melt it down; and the laſt Fire, being as a *Refiner*'s fire, will make an improvement in it, both as to matter and form. To conclude, it muſt be reduc'd into a fluid Maſs, in the nature of a Chaos, as it was at firſt; but this laſt will be a Fiery Chaos, as that was Watery; and from this ſtate it will emerge again into a Paradiſiacal World. But this being the Subject of the following Book, we will diſcourſe no more of it in this place.

CHAP. X.

Concerning the beginning and progreſs of the Conflagration, what part of the Earth will firſt be Burnt. The manner of the future deſtruction of Rome. *The laſt ſtate and conſummation of the general Fire.*

HAving remov'd the chief obſtructtions to our deſign, and drawn a method for weakning the ſtrength of Nature, by draining the Trench, and beating down thoſe Bulwarks, wherein ſhe ſeems to place her greateſt confidence: we muſt now go to work; making choice of the weakeſt part of Nature for our firſt attack, where the fire may be the eaſieſt admitted, and the beſt maintain'd and preſerv'd.

And for our better direction, it will be of uſe to conſider what we noted before, *viz.* That the Conflagration is not a pure *Natural Fatality*, but a *mixt Fatality*; or a Divine Judgment ſupported by Natu-

ral

ral Cauſes. And if we can find ſome part of the Earth, or of the Chriſtian World, that hath more of theſe natural diſpoſitions to Inflammation than the reſt; and is alſo repreſented by Scripture as a more peculiar object of God's Judgments at the comeing of our Saviour, we may juſtly pitch upon that part of the World as firſt to be deſtroyed. Nature and Providence conſpiring to make that the firſt Sacrifice to this Fiery Vengeance.

Now as to Natural diſpoſitions, in any Country or Region of the Earth, to be ſet on Fire, They ſeem to be chiefly theſe two, Sulphureouſneſs of the Soil, and an hollow, mountainous conſtruction of the ground. Where theſe two diſpoſitions meet in the ſame tract or territory, (the one as to the quality of the matter, and the other as to the form) it ſtands like a Pile of fit materials, ready ſet to have the Fire put to it. And as to Divine Indications where this General Fire will begin, the Scripture points to the Seat of Antichriſt whereſoever that is, for the beginning of it. The Scripture, I ſay, points at this, two ways, Firſt, in telling us that our Saviour at his coming *in flames of Fire ſhall conſume the wicked one, The Man of ſin, the Son of perdition, with the Spirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy him with the brightneſs of his preſence.* 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. *ch.* 2. 8. Secondly, under the name of *Myſtical Babylon*; which is allowed by all to be the Seat of Antichriſt, and by Scripture always condemn'd to the Fire. This we find in plain words aſſerted by S. *John* in the 18*th chap.* of his *Revelations*, and in the 19*th.* (*ver.* 3.) under the name of the *Great Whore*; which is the ſame City and the ſame Seat, according to the interpretation of Scripture it ſelf. And the Prophet *Daniel* when he had ſet the *Ancient of Days* upon his fiery Throne, ſays, *The Body of the Beaſt was given to the burning flame.* Which I take to be the ſame thing with what S. *John* ſays afterwards, (*Apoc.* 19. 20.) *The Beaſt and the falſe Prophet were caſt alive into a Lake of fire burning with brimſtone.* By theſe places of Scripture it ſeems manifeſt, that Antichriſt, and the Seat of Antichriſt, will be conſumed with Fire, at the coming of our Saviour. And 'tis very reaſonable

ver. 8. & *ver.* 19. *ch.* 17. 18. *Dan.* 7. 9, 10, 11.

and decorous, that the Grand Traitor and Head of the Apoſtaſie ſhould be made the firſt example of the divine vengeance.

Thus much being allow'd from Scripture, let us now return to Nature again; to ſeek out that part of the Chriſtian World, that from its own conſtitution is moſt ſubject to burning; by the ſulphureouſneſs of its Soil, and its fiery Mountains and Caverns. This we ſhall eaſily find to be the *Roman Territory*, or the Countrey of *Italy*: which, by all accounts, ancient and modern, is a ſtore-houſe of fire; as if it was condemn'd to that fate by God and Nature, and to be an Incendiary, as it were, to the reſt of the World. And ſeeing *Myſtical Babylon*, the Seat of Antichriſt, is the ſame *Rome*, and its Territory; as it is underſtood by moſt Interpreters, of former and later Ages; you ſee both our lines meet in this point; And that there is a fairneſs, on both hands, to conclude, that, at the glorious appearance of our Saviour, the Conflagration will begin at the City of *Rome* and the *Roman* Territory.

Nature hath ſav'd us the pains of kindling a fire in thoſe parts of the Earth, for, ſince the memory of man, there have always been ſubterraneous fires in *Italy*. And the *Romans* did not preſerve their Veſtal fire with more conſtancy, than Nature hath done her fiery Mountains in ſome part or other of that Territory. Let us then ſuppoſe, when the fatal time draws near, all theſe Burning Mountains to be fill'd and repleniſh'd with fit materials for ſuch a deſign; and when our Saviour appears in the Clouds, with an Hoſt of Angels, that they all begin to play, as Fire-works at the Triumphal Entry of a Prince. Let *Veſuvius*, *Ætna*, *Strongyle*, and all the *Vulcanian* Iſlands, break out into flames; and by the Earth-quakes, which then will rage, let us ſuppoſe new Eruptions, or new Mountains open'd, in the *Apennines*, and near to *Rome*; and to vomit out fire in the ſame manner as the old Volcano's. Then let the ſulphureous ground take fire; and ſeeing the Soil of that Countrey, in ſeveral places, is ſo full of brimſtone, that the ſteams and ſmoke of it viſibly riſe out of the Earth; we may reaſonably

ſuppoſe,

ſuppoſe, that it will burn openly, and be inflam'd, at that time. Laſtly, the Lightnings of the Air, and the flaming ſtreams of the melting Skies, will mingle and joyn with theſe burnings of the Earth. And theſe three Cauſes meeting together, as they cannot but make a dreadful Scene, ſo they will eaſily deſtroy and conſume whatſoever lies within the compaſs of their fury.

Thus you may ſuppoſe the beginning of the General Fire; And it will be carried on by like cauſes, tho' in leſſer degrees, in other parts of the Earth. But as to *Rome*, there is ſtill, in my opinion, a more dreadful fate that will attend it; namely, to be abſorpt or ſwallowed up in a Lake of fire and brimſtone, after the manner of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*. This, in my judgment, will be the fate and final concluſion of *Myſtical Babylon*, to ſink as a great Milſtone into the Sea, and never to appear more. Hear what the Prophet ſays, *A mighty Angel took up a ſtone, like a great Milſtone, and caſt it into the Sea, ſaying, thus, with violence, ſhall that great City Babylon be thrown down; and ſhall be found no more at all.* Apoc. 18. 21. Simply to be burnt, does not at all anſwer to this deſcription of its periſhing, by *ſinking like a Milſtone into the Sea, and never appearing more*, nor of, *not having its place ever more found*; that is, leaving no remains or marks of it. A City that is onely burnt, cannot be ſaid to *fall like a Milſtone into the Sea*; or that it *can never more be found*: For after the burning of a City, the ruines ſtand, and its place is well known. Wherefore, in both reſpects, beſides this exteriour burning, there muſt be an abſorption of this *Myſtical Babylon*, the Seat of the Beaſt; and thereupon a total diſappearance of it. This alſo agrees with the ſuddenneſs of the judgment, which is a repeated character of it: *Chap.* 18. 8, 10, 17, 19. Now what kind of abſorption this will be, into what, and in what manner, we may learn from what St. *John* ſays afterwards, (ch. 19. 20.) *The Beaſt and the falſe Prophet were caſt alive into a Lake of fire and brimſtone.* You muſt not imagine that they were bound, hand and foot, and ſo thrown headlong into this Lake, but they were ſwallowed up alive, they and theirs, as *Corah*

and

and his company. Or, to uſe a plainer example, after the manner of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*; which periſh't by fire, and at the ſame time ſunk into a Dead Sea, or a Lake of brimſtone.

This was a lively type of the fate of *Rome*, or *Myſtical Babylon*; and 'tis fit it ſhould reſemble *Sodom*, as well in its puniſhment, as in its crimes. Neither is it a hard thing to conceive how ſuch an abſorption may come to paſs; That being a thing ſo uſual in Earthquakes, and Earth-quakes being ſo frequent in that Region. And laſtly, that this ſhould be after the manner of *Sodom*, turn'd into a Lake of fire, will not be at all ſtrange, if we conſider, that there will be many ſubterraneous Lakes of fire at that time, when the bowels of the Earth begin to melt, and the Mountains ſpew out ſtreams of liquid fire. The ground therefore being hollow and rotten in thoſe parts, when it comes to be ſhaken with a mighty Earth-quake, the foundations will ſink, and the whole frame fall into an Abyſs of fire below, as a Milſtone into the Sea. And this will give occaſion to that Cry, *Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen*, and ſhall never more be found.

This ſeems to be a probable account, according to Scripture and reaſon, of the beginning of the general fire, and of the particular fate of *Rome*. But it may be propos'd here as an objection againſt this Hypotheſis, that the Mediterranean Sea, lying all along the Coaſt of *Italy*, muſt needs be a ſufficient guard to that Countrey againſt the invaſion of fire; or at leaſt muſt needs extinguiſh it, before it can do much miſchief there, or propagate it ſelf into other Countreys. I thought we had in a good meaſure prevented this objection before, by ſhowing how the Ocean would be diminiſh'd before the Conflagration, and eſpecially the Arms and Sinus's of the Ocean; and of theſe none would be more ſubject to this diminution than the Mediterranean, for receiving its ſupplies from the Ocean and the Black Sea, if theſe came to ſink in their chanels, they would not riſe ſo high, as to be capable to flow into the Mediterranean, at either end. And theſe ſupplies being cut off, it would ſoon empty it ſelf ſo far, partly by evaporation, and partly by ſub-

terraneous

terraneous paſſages, as to ſhrink from all its ſhores, and become onely a ſtanding Pool of water in the middle of the Chanel. Nay, 'tis poſſible, by flouds of fire deſcending from the many Volcano's upon its ſhores, it might it ſelf be converted into a Lake of fire, and rather help than obſtruct the progreſs of the Conflagration.

It may indeed be made a queſtion, whether this fiery Vengeance upon the ſeat of Antichriſt, will not precede the general Conflagration, at ſome diſtance of time, as a fore-runner and forewarner to the World, that the reſt of the People may have ſpace to repent; And particularly the *Jews*, being Spectators of this Tragedy, and of the miraculous appearance of our Saviour, may ſee the hand of God in it, and be convinc'd of the truth and divine authority of the Chriſtian Religion. I ſay, this ſuppoſition would leave room for theſe and ſome other prophetick Scenes, which we know not well where to place; But ſeeing *The Day of the Lord* is repreſented in Scripture as one entire thing, without interruption or diſcontinuation, and that it is to begin with the deſtruction of Antichriſt, we have warrant enough to purſue the reſt of the Conflagration from this beginning and introduction.

Let us then ſuppoſe the ſame preparations made in the other parts of the Earth to continue the fire; for the Conflagration of the World being a work of providence, we may be ſure ſuch meaſures are taken, as will effectually carry it on, when once begun. The Body of the Earth will be looſen'd and broken by Earth-quakes, the more ſolid parts impregnated with ſulphur, and the cavities fill'd with unctuous fumes and exhalations; ſo as the whole Maſs will be but as one great funeral Pile, ready built, and wanting nothing but the hand of a deſtroying Angel, to give it fire. I will not take upon me to determine which way this devouring Enemy will ſteer his courſe from *Italy*, or in what order he will advance and enter the ſeveral Regions of our Continent; that would be an undertaking, as uncertain, as uſeleſs. But we cannot doubt of his ſucceſs, which way ſoever he goes: unleſs where the Chanel of the Ocean may chance to ſtop

him.

him. But as to that, we allow, that different Continents may have different Fires; not propagated from one another, but of distinct sources and originals; and so likewise in remote Islands; and therefore no long passage or trajection will be requir'd from shore to shore. And even the Ocean it self, will at length be as Fiery as any part of the Land; But that, with its Rocks, like Death, will be the last thing subdued.

As to the Animate World, the Fire will over-run it with a swift and rapid course, and all living Creatures will be suffocated or consumed, at the first assault. And at the same time, the beauty of the Fields and the external decorations of Nature will be defac'd. Then the Cities and the Towns, and all the works of man's hands, will burn like stubble before the wind. These will be soon dispatch'd; but the great burthen of the Work still remains; which is that *Liquefaction* we mention'd before, or a *melting fire*, much more strong and vehement than these transient blazes, which do but sweep the surface of the Earth. This Liquefaction, I say, we prov'd be- *ch. 9.* fore out of Scripture, as the last state of the fiery Deluge. And 'tis this, which, at length, will make the Sea it self a *Lake of fire and brimstone.* When instead of rivers of Waters which used to flow into it from the Land, there come streams and rivulets of Sulphureous Liquors, and purulent melted matter, which, following the tract of their natural gravity will fall into this great drain of the Earth. Upon which mixture, the remaining parts of sweet water will soon evaporate, and the salt mingling with the Sulphur will make a Dead Sea, an *Asphaltites*, a Lake of *Sodom*, a Cup of the Wine of the fierceness of God's wrath.

We noted before two remarkable effects of the *Burning Mountains*, which would contribute to the Conflagration of the World; and gave instances of both in former Eruptions of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*. One was, of those Balls or lumps of Fire, which they throw about in the time of their rage; and the other, of those torrents of liquid Fire, which rowl down

their

their ſides to the next Seas or Valleys. In the firſt reſpect theſe Mountains are as ſo many Batteries, planted by Providence in ſeveral parts of the Earth, to fling thoſe fiery Bombs into ſuch places, or ſuch Cities, as are marked out for deſtruction. And in the ſecond reſpect, they are to dry up the Waters, and the Rivers, and the Sea it ſelf, when they fall into its chanel. *T. Fazellus*, a *Sicilian*, who writ the Hiſtory of that Iſland, tells us of ſuch a River of fire (upon an eruption of *Ætna*) near twenty eight miles long; reaching from the Mountain to Port *Longina*; and might have been much longer if it had not been ſtopt by the Sea. Many ſuch as theſe, and far greater, we ought in reaſon to imagin, when all the Earth begins to melt, and to ripen towards a diſſolution. It will then be full of theſe Sulphureous juices, as Grapes with Wine; and theſe will be ſqueez'd out of the Earth into the Sea, as out of a wine-preſs into the Receiver; to fill up that *Cup with the wine of the fierceneſs of God's wrath.* *Annal. Sic. dec. 1. li. 2. c. 4.*

If we may be allow'd to bring Prophetical paſſages of Scripture to a natural ſence, as doubtleſs ſome of thoſe muſt that reſpect the end of the World, theſe phraſes which we have now ſuggeſted, of the *Wine-preſs of the wrath of God. Drinking the fierceneſs of his wine, poured, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*, with expreſſions of the like nature that occur ſometimes in the old Prophets, but eſpecially in the Apocalypſe; Theſe, I ſay, might receive a full and emphatical explication from this ſtate of things which now lies before us. I would not exclude any other explication of leſs force, as that of alluding to the *bitter cup* or *mixt potion* that us'd to be given to malefactors: but that, methinks, is a low ſence when applyed to theſe places in the Apocalypſe. That theſe phraſes ſignifie God's remarkable judgments, all allow, and here they plainly relate to the end of the World, to the laſt Plagues, and the Laſt of the laſt Plagues, chap. 16. 19. Beſides, the Angel that preſided over this judgment, is ſaid to be an Angel that *had power over fire*; And thoſe who are to drink this potion, are ſaid to be *tormented with fire and brimſtone*, ch. 14. 10. This preſiding Angel ſeems to be our *Apoc. 14. 10, 19. c. 16. 19. c. 19. 15.*

Saviour himſelf (c. 19. 15.) who when he comes to execute Divine Vengeance upon the Earth, gives his orders in theſe words, *Gather the cluſters of the Vine of the Earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.* And thereupon the Deſtroying Angel *thruſt in his ſickle into the Earth, and gathered the Vine of the Earth, and caſt it into the great Wine-preſs of the Wrath of God.* And this made a potion, *compounded of ſeveral ingredients, but not diluted with water*; (ch. 14. 10.) and was indeed a potion of fire and brimſtone and all burning materials mixt together. The ſimilitudes of Scripture are ſeldom nice and exact, but rather bold, noble and great; and according to the circumſtances which we have obſerv'd, This *Vineyard* ſeems to be the *Earth*, and this *Vintage* the end of the World; The preſſing of the Grapes into the cup or veſſel that receives them, the diſtillation of burning liquors from all parts of the Earth into the trough of the Sea; and that lake of red Fire, the bloud of thoſe Grapes ſo flowing into it.

ch. 14.18,19.

τῦ κεκερασμένε ἀκράτε.

'Tis true, this judgment of the Vintage and Wine-preſs, and the effects of it, ſeem to aim more eſpecially at ſome particular region of the Earth, ch. 14. 20. And I am not againſt that, provided the ſubſtance of the explication be ſtill retained, and the univerſal Sea of Fire be that which follows in the next Chapter, under the name of a *Sea of Glaſs, mingled with Fire*; This I think expreſſes the higheſt and compleat ſtate of the Conflagration; when the Mountains are fled away, and not only ſo, but the exterior region of the Earth quite diſſolv'd, like wax before the Sun; The Chanel of the Sea fill'd with a maſs of fluid fire, and the ſame fire overflowing all the Globe, and covering the whole Earth, as the Deluge, or the firſt Abyſs. Then will the Triumphal Songs and Hallelujah's be ſung for the Victories of the Lamb over all his Enemies and over Nature it ſelf. *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: Juſt and true are thy ways thou King of Saints. Who ſhall not fear thee O Lord, and glorifie thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.*

ch. 16. 2.

Apoc. 15. 3, 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

An Account of those extraordinary Phænomena and Wonders in Nature, that, according to Scripture, will precede the coming of Christ, and the Conflagration of the World.

IF we reflect upon the History of Burning Mountains, we cannot but observe, that, before their Eruptions, there are usually some changes in the Earth or in the Air, in the Sea or in the Sun it self; as signs and forerunners of the ensuing storm. We may then easily conclude that when the last great Storm is a coming, and all the Vulcano's of the Earth ready to burst, and the frame of the World to be dissolv'd, there will be previous signs, in the Heavens and on the Earth, to introduce this Tragical fate. Nature cannot come to that extremity, without some symptomes of her illness; nor die silently, without pangs or complaint. But we are naturally heavy of belief as to Futurities, and can scarce fancy any other Scenes, or other state of nature, than what is present, and continually before our eyes; we will therefore, to cure our unbelief, take Scripture for our guide, and keep within the limits of its Predictions.

The Scripture plainly tells us of Signs or Prodigies that will precede the coming of our Saviour, and the end of the World; both in the Heavens and on the Earth. The Sun, Moon, and Stars, will be disturb'd in their motion or aspect; The Earth and the Sea will roar and tremble, and the Mountains fall at his Presence. These things both the Prophets and Evangelists have told us; But what we do not understand, we are slow to believe; and therefore those that cannot apprehend how such Changes should come to pass in the Natural World, chuse rather to allegorize all these expressions of Scripture, and to make them signifie no more than political changes of Governments

and Empires; and the great confuſions that will be amongſt the People and Princes of the Earth towards the end of the World. So that *darkning of the Sun, ſhaking of the Earth*, and ſuch like phraſes of Scripture, according to theſe Interpreters, are to be underſtood onely in a moral ſence.

And they think they have a warrant for this interpretation from the Prophetick ſtyle of the old Teſtament, where the deſtruction of Cities, and Empires, and great Princes, is often deſcrib'd by ſuch figures, taken from the Natural World. So much is true indeed as to the phraſe of the old Prophets in ſome places; but I take the true reaſon and deſign of that, to be a typical adumbration of what was intended ſhould literally come to paſs in the great and univerſal deſtruction of the World; whereof theſe partial deſtructions were onely ſhadows and prefigurations. But to determine this caſe, Let us take the known and approved rule for interpreting Scripture, *Not to recede from the literal ſence without neceſſity*, or where the nature of the ſubject will admit of a literal interpretation. Now as to thoſe caſes in the old Teſtament, hiſtory and matter of fact do ſhow that they did not come to paſs literally, therefore muſt not be ſo underſtood; But as for thoſe that concern the end of the World, as they cannot be determin'd in that way, ſeeing they are yet *future*; So neither is there any Natural repugnancy or improbability that they ſhould come literally to paſs: On the contrary, from the intuition of that ſtate of Nature, one would rather conclude the probability or neceſſity of them; That there may and muſt be ſuch diſorders in the external World before the general diſſolution. Beſides, if we admit Prodigies in any caſe, or Providential indications of God's judgments to come, there can be no caſe ſuppos'd, wherein it will be more reaſonable or proper to admit them, than when they are to be the Meſſengers of an Univerſal vengeance and deſtruction.

Let us therefore conſider what ſigns Scripture hath taken notice of, as deſtin'd to appear at that time, to publiſh, as it were, and proclaim the approaching end of the World; And how far they will admit of a natural

tural explication, according to those grounds we have already given, in explaining the causes and manner of the Conflagration. These Signs are chiefly, Earthquakes, and extraordinary commotions of the Seas. Then the darkness or bloudy colour of the Sun and Moon; The shaking of the Powers of Heaven, the fulgurations of the Air and the falling of Stars. As to Earth-quakes, we have upon several occasions shown, that these will necessarily be multiplied towards the end of the World; when, by an excess of drought and heat, exhalations will more abound within the Earth; and, from the same causes, their inflammation also will be more frequent, than in the ordinary state of nature. And as all Bodies, when dry'd, become more porous and full of Vacuities; so the Body of the Earth will be at that time: And the Mines or Cavities wherein the fumes and exhalations lodge, will accordingly be of greater extent, open into one another, and continued through long tracts and regions; By which means, when an Earth-quake comes, as the shock will be more strong and violent, so it may reach to a vast compass of ground, and whole Islands or Continents be shaken at once, when these trains have taken fire. The effects also of such concussions, will not onely affect Mankind, but all the Elements and the Inhabitants of them.

I do not wonder therefore that frequent and great Earth-quakes should be made a sign of an approaching Conflagration; and the highest expressions of the Prophets concerning the *Day of the Lord*, may be understood in a literal sence, if they be finally referr'd to the general destruction of the World, and not terminated solely upon those particular Countries or People, to whom they are at first directed. Hear what *Ezekiel* says upon this subject: *For in my Jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken; Surely in that Day there shall be a great shaking in the Land of Israel. So that the Fishes of the Sea, and the Fowls of the Heaven, and the Beasts of the Field, and all creeping things that creep upon the Earth; and all the Men that are upon the face of the Earth, shall shake at my presence; and the Mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall,* Ch. 38. 19, 20, 22.

fall, and every wall ſhall fall to the ground. —— *And I will rain an over-flowing rain, and great hail-ſtones, fire and brimſtone.* The Prophet *Iſaias* deſcribes theſe judgments in terms as high, and relating to the Natural World: *The Windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the Earth do ſhake. The Earth is utterly broken down, the Earth is clean diſſolv'd, the Earth is moved exceedingly. The Earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and ſhall be removed like a Cottage, and the tranſgreſſion thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall and not riſe again.*

ch. 24. 18, 19, 20.

To reſtrain all theſe things to *Judea,* as their adequate and final object, is to force both the words and the ſence. Here are manifeſt alluſions and foot-ſteps of the deſtruction of the World, and the diſſolution of the Earth; partly as it was in the Deluge, and partly as it will be in its laſt ruine; torn, broken, and ſhatter'd. But moſt Men have fallen into that errour, To fancy both the deſtructions of the World, by water and by fire, quiet, noiſeleſs things; executed without any ruines or ruptures in Nature; That the Deluge was but a great Pool of ſtill waters, made by the rains and inundation of the Sea: and the Conflagration will be onely a ſuperficial ſcorching of the Earth, with a running fire. Theſe are falſe Idea's, and unſuitable to Scripture: for as the Deluge is there repreſented a Diſruption of the Abyſs, and conſequently of the then habitable Earth; ſo the future combuſtion of it, according to the repreſentations of Scripture, is to be uſher'd in and accompanied with all ſort of violent impreſſions upon Nature; and the chief inſtrument of theſe violences will be Earth-quakes. Theſe will tear the Body of the Earth, and ſhake its foundations; rend the Rocks, and pull down the tall Mountains; ſometimes overturn, and ſometimes ſwallow up Towns and Cities; diſturb and diſorder the Elements, and make a general confuſion in Nature.

Next to Earth-quakes, we may conſider the *roarings of a troubled Sea.* This is another ſign of a dying World. St. *Luke* hath ſet down a great many of them together; Let us hear his words: *And there ſhall be ſigns in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars; and upon*

ch. 21. 25, 26, 27.

upon the Earth, distress of Nations, with perplexity, The Sea and the Waves roaring. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the Earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory, &c. As some would allegorize these Signs, which we noted before; so others would confine them to the destruction of *Jerusalem.* But 'tis plain, by this *coming of the Son of man in the clouds,* and the *redemption of the faithful,* and at the same time, the *sound of the last trumpet,* which all relate to the end of the World, that something further is intended than the destruction of *Jerusalem.* And though there were Prodigies at the destruction of that City and State, yet not of this force, nor with these circumstances. 'Tis true, those partial destructions and calamities, as we observ'd before, of *Babylon, Jerusalem,* and the *Roman* Empire, being types of an universal and final destruction of all God's Enemies, have, in the pictures of them, some of the same strokes, to show they are all from the same hand; decreed by the same wisdom, foretold by the same Spirit; and the same power and providence that have already wrought the one, will also work the other, in due time; the former being still pledges, as well as prefigurations, of the latter. *Ver.* 28. *Mat.* 24. 31.

Let us then proceed in our explication of this sign, *The roaring of the Sea, and the Waves,* applying it to the end of the World. I do not look upon this ominous noise of the Sea, as the effect of a tempest, for then it would not strike such a terrour into the Inhabitants of the Earth, nor make them apprehensive of some great evil coming upon the World, as this will do; what proceeds from visible causes, and such as may happen in a common course of Nature, does not so much amaze us, nor affright us. Therefore 'tis more likely these disturbances of the Sea proceed from below; partly by sympathy and revulsions from the Land; by Earth-quakes there, and exhausting the subterraneous cavities of waters, which will draw again from the Seas what supplies they can: And partly by Earth-quakes in the very Sea it self; with exhalations

and

and fiery Eruptions from the bottom of it. Things indeed that happen at other times, more or leſs, but at this conjuncture, all cauſes conſpiring, they will break out with more violence, and put the whole Body of the Waters into a tumultuary motion. I do not ſee any occaſion, at this time, for high Winds; neither can think a ſuperficial agitation of the Waves would anſwer this Phænomenon; but 'tis rather from Contorſions in the bowels of the Ocean, which make it roar, as it were, for pain. Some Cauſes impelling the Waters one way, and ſome another, make inteſtine ſtruglings and contrary motions; from whence proceed unuſual noiſes, and ſuch a troubled ſtate of the Waters, as does not only make the Sea innavigable, but alſo ſtrikes terror into all the Maritime inhabitants, that live within the view or ſound of it.

So much for the Earth and the Sea. The face of the Heavens alſo will be chang'd in divers reſpects. The Sun and the Moon darkned, or of a bloudy, or pale countenance; The Celeſtial Powers ſhaken, and the Stars unſetled in their Orbs. As to the Sun and Moon, their obſcuration or change of colour is no more than what happens commonly before the Eruption of a fiery Mountain; *Dion Caſſius*, you ſee, hath taken notice of it in that Eruption of *Ætna* which he deſcribes; and others upon the like occaſions in *Veſuvius*. And 'tis a thing of eaſie explication; for according as the Atmoſphere is more or leſs clear or turbid, the Luminaries are more or leſs conſpicuous; and according to the nature of thoſe fumes or exhalations that ſwim in the Air, the face of the Sun is diſcolour'd, ſometimes one way, ſometimes another. You ſee, in an ordinary Experiment, when we look upon one another through the fumes of Sulphur, we appear pale like ſo many Ghoſts; and in ſome foggy days the Sun hangs in the Firmament as a lump of Bloud. And both the Sun and Moon at their riſing, when their light comes to us through the thick vapours of the Earth, are red and fiery. Theſe are not changes wrought in the ſubſtance of the Luminaries, but in the modifications of their light as it flows to

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us. For colours are but Light in a ſort of diſguiſe; as it paſſes through *Mediums* of different qualities, it takes different forms; but the matter is ſtill the ſame, and returns to its ſimplicity when it comes again into a pure air.

Now the air may be changed and corrupted to a great degree, tho' there appear no viſible change to our eye. This is manifeſt from infectious airs, and the changes of the air before ſtorms and rains; which we feel commonly ſooner than we ſee, and ſome other creatures perceive much ſooner than we do. 'Tis no wonder then if before this mighty ſtorm the diſpoſitions of the Air be quite alter'd; eſpecially if we conſider, what we have ſo often noted before, that there will be a great abundance of fumes and exhalations through the whole Atmoſphere of the Earth, before the laſt Fire breaks out; whereby the Light of the Sun may be tinctur'd in ſeveral ways. And laſtly, it may be ſo order'd providentially, that the Body of the Sun may contract at that time ſome Spots or *Maculæ* far greater than uſual, and by that means be really darkened; not to us only, but to all the neighbouring Planets. And this will have a proportionable effect upon the Moon too, for the diminution of her light. So that upon all ſuppoſitions theſe Phænomena are very intelligible, if not neceſſary forerunners of the Conflagration.

The next Sign given us, is, that the *powers of heaven will be ſhaken.* By the *Heavens* in this place is either underſtood the Planetary Heavens, or that of the *Fix'd Stars*; but this latter being infinitely diſtant from the Earth, cannot be really affected by the Conflagration. Nor the powers of it, that is, its motions or the Bodies contain'd in it, any way ſhaken or diſorder'd. But in appearance theſe celeſtial Bodies may ſeem to be ſhaken and their motions diſorder'd; as in a tempeſt by night, when the ſhip is toſs'd with contrary and uncertain motions, the Heavens ſeem to fluctuate over our heads, and the Stars to reel to and fro, when the motion is only in our own Veſſel. So poſſibly the uncertain motions of the Atmoſphere, and ſometimes of the Earth it ſelf, may ſo vary the

ſight and aſpect of this ſtarry Canopy, that it may ſeem to ſhake and tremble.

But if we underſtand this of the *Planetary Heavens*, They may really be ſhaken. Providence either ordering ſome great changes in the other Planets previouſly to the Conflagration of our Planet; as 'tis probable there was a great change in *Venus*, at the time of our *Deluge*. Or the great ſhakings and concuſſions of our Globe at that time, affecting ſome of the neighbouring Orbs, at leaſt that of the Moon, may cauſe Anomalies and irregularities in their motions. But the ſence that I ſhould pitch upon chiefly for explaining this phraſe of *ſhaking the powers of heaven*, comprehends, in a good meaſure, both theſe Heavens, of the Fix'd Stars and of the Planets; 'Tis that change of ſituation in the Axis of the Earth, which we have formerly mention'd; whereby the Stars will ſeem to change their places, and the whole Univerſe to take another poſture. This is ſufficiently known to thoſe that know the different conſequences of a ſtrait or oblique poſture of the Earth. And as the heavens and the earth were, in this ſence, once ſhaken before; namely at the Deluge, when they loſt their firſt ſituation; ſo now they will be ſhaken again, and thereby return to the poſture they had before that firſt concuſſion. And this I take to be the true literal ſence of the Prophet *Haggai*, repeated by S. *Paul*, *Yet once more I ſhake not the Earth only, but alſo heaven.*

ch. 2. 6.

Hebr. 12. 26.

The laſt Sign we ſhall take notice of, is that of *Falling Stars*. *And the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven*, ſays our Saviour, *Matt.* 24. 29. We are ſure, from the nature of the thing, that this cannot be underſtood either of fix'd Stars or Planets; for if either of theſe ſhould tumble from the Skies, and reach the Earth, they would break it all in pieces, or ſwallow it up, as the Sea does a ſinking ſhip; and at the ſame time would put all the inferiour univerſe into confuſion. It is neceſſary therefore by theſe Stars to underſtand either fiery Meteors falling from the middle Region of the Air, or Comets and Blazing Stars. No doubt there will be all ſorts of fiery Meteors at that time; and amongſt

amongſt others, thoſe that are call'd *Falling Stars*; which, tho' they are not conſiderable ſingly, yet if they were multiplyed in great numbers, falling, as the Prophet ſays, as *leafs from the Vine, or figs from the fig-tree,* they would make an aſtoniſhing ſight. But I think this expreſſion does chiefly refer to Comets; which are dead Stars, and may truly be ſaid to fall from heaven, when they leave their ſeats above, and thoſe ethereal regions wherein they were fixt, and ſink into this lower World; where they wander about with a blaze in their tail, or a flame about their head, as if they came on purpoſe to be the Meſſengers of ſome fiery Vengeance. If numbers of theſe blazing Stars ſhould fall into our heaven together, they would make a dreadful and formidable appearance; And I am apt to think that Providence hath ſo contriv'd the periods of their motion, that there will be an unuſual concourſe of them at that time, within the view of the Earth, to be a prelude to this laſt and moſt Tragical Scene of the Sublunary World. *Iſa.* 34. 4.

I do not know any more in Scripture relating to the laſt Fire, that, upon the grounds laid down in this diſcourſe, may not receive a ſatisfactory explication. It reaches, beyond the Signs before mention'd, to the higheſt expreſſions of Scripture, As *Lakes of fire and brimſtone, a molten Sea mingled with fire, the Liquefaction of Mountains,* and of the Earth it ſelf. We need not now look upon theſe things as Hyperbolical and Poetical ſtrains, but as barefac'd Prophecies, and things that will literally come to paſs as they are predicted. One thing more will be expected in a juſt hypotheſis or Theory of the Conflagration, namely, that it ſhould anſwer, not only all the conditions and characters belonging to the laſt Fire, but ſhould alſo make way and lay the foundation of another World to ſucceed this, or of *New Heavens* and a *New Earth.* For S. *Peter* hath taught this doctrine of the *Renovation* of the World, as poſitively and expreſly as that of its Conflagration. And therefore they that ſo explain the deſtruction of the preſent World, as to leave it afterwards in an eternal rubbiſh, without any hopes of reſtoration, do not anſwer the Chriſtian doctrine con-

cerning it. But as to our Hypotheſis, we are willing to ſtand this farther trial, and be accountable for the conſequences of the Conflagration, as well as the Antecedents and manner of it. And we have accordingly in the following Book, from the Aſhes of this, rais'd a New Earth; which we leave to the enjoyment of the Readers. In the mean time, to cloſe our diſcourſe, we will bid farewel to the preſent World, in a ſhort review of its laſt flames.

CHAP. XII.

An imperfect deſcription of the Coming of our Saviour, and of the World on Fire.

CErtainly there is nothing in the whole courſe of Nature, or of Humane affairs, ſo great and ſo extraordinary, as the two laſt Scenes of them, THE COMING OF OUR SAVIOUR, and the BURNING OF THE WORLD. If we could draw in our minds the Pictures of theſe, in true and lively colours, We ſhould ſcarce be able to attend to any thing elſe, or ever divert our imagination from theſe two objects. For what can more affect us than the greateſt Glory that ever was viſible upon Earth, and at the ſame time the greateſt Terror. A God deſcending in the Head of an Army of Angels, and a Burning World under his feet.

Theſe are things truly above expreſſion; And not only ſo, but ſo different and remote from our ordinary thoughts and conceptions, that he that comes neareſt to a true deſcription of them, ſhall be look'd upon as the moſt extravagant. 'Tis our unhappineſs to be ſo much uſed to little trifling things in this life, that when any thing great is repreſented to us, it appears phantaſtical: An Idea, made by ſome contemplative or melancholy perſon. I will not venture therefore, without premiſing ſome grounds out of Scri-

Scripture, to say any thing concerning This Glorious Appearance. As to the Burning of the World, I think we have already laid a foundation sufficient to support the highest description that can be made of it; But the coming of our Saviour being wholly out of the way of Natural Causes, it is reasonable we should take all directions we can from Scripture, that we may give a more fitting and just account of that Sacred Pomp.

I need not mention those places of Scripture that prove the second coming of our Saviour in general, or his return to the Earth again at the end of the World: no Christian can doubt of this, 'tis so often repeated in those Sacred Writings. But the manner and circumstances of this Coming, or of this Appearance, are the things we now enquire into. And in the first place, we may observe that Scripture tells us our Saviour will come in *Flaming Fire*, and with an *Host of mighty Angels*; so says S. *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*, *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with mighty Angels; in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* In the second place, our Saviour says himself, *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels.* From which two places we may learn, first, that the appearance of our Saviour will be with flames of Fire. Secondly, with an Host of Angels. Thirdly, in the glory of his Father. By which glory of the Father I think is understood that Throne of Glory represented by *Daniel* for the *Ancient of Days.* For our Saviour speaks here to the *Jews*, and probably in a way intelligible to them; And the Glory of the Father which they were most likely to understand, would be either the Glory wherein God appeared at Mount *Sinai*, upon the giving of the Law, whereof the Apostle speaks largely to the *Hebrews*; or that which *Daniel* represents Him in at the day of Judgment. And this latter being more proper to the subject of our Saviour's discourse, 'tis more likely this expression refers to it. Give me leave therefore to set down that description of the Glory of the Father upon his Throne, from the

Matt. 24. 30, 31. *Act.* 1. 11. & 3. 20, 21. *Apoc.* 1. 7. *Heb.* 9. 28.

1 *Ep.* 1. 7.

Matt. 16. 27.

ch. 12. 18, 19, 20, 21.

Pro-

Prophet *Daniel*, ch. 7, 9. *And I beheld till the Thrones were* * *ſet, and the Ancient of days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued and came forth from before him, thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him.* With this Throne of the glory of the Father, let us, if you pleaſe, compare the Throne of the Son of God, as it was ſeen by St. *John* in the Apocalypſe, *ch.* 4. 2, &c. *And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a throne was ſet in heaven, and one ſate on the Throne. And he that ſat,* was *to look upon* like *a Jaſper, and a Sardine ſtone: and there was a Rain-bow round about the Throne, in appearance like unto an Emerald. And out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings, and Thunderings, and Voices,* &c. *and before the Throne was a Sea of glaſs like unto Cryſtal.*

* 'Tis ill render'd in the Engliſh, *caſt down.*

In theſe repreſentations you have ſome beams of the glory of the Father and of the Son; which may be partly a direction to us, in conceiving the luſtre of our Saviour's appearance. Let us further obſerve, if you pleaſe, how external nature will be affected at the ſight of God, or of this approaching glory. The Scripture often takes notice of this, and in terms very high and eloquent. The Pſalmiſt ſeems to have lov'd that ſubject above others; to ſet out the greatneſs of the day of the Lord, and the conſternation of all nature at that time. He throws about his thunder and lightning, makes the Hills to melt like wax at the preſence of the Lord, and the very foundations of the Earth to tremble, as you may ſee in the 18*th. Pſalm*, and the 97. and the 104. and ſeveral others, which are too long to be here inſerted. So the Prophet *Habakkuk*, in his Prophetick prayer, *Chap.* 3*d.* hath many Ejaculations to the like purpoſe. And the Prophet *Nahum* ſays, *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his preſence: yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.*

But more particularly, as to the face of Nature juſt before the coming of our Saviour, that may be beſt collected from the ſigns of his coming mention'd in the precedent Chapter. Thoſe all meeting together, help

help to prepare and make ready a Theater, fit for an angry God to come down upon. The countenance of the Heavens will be dark and gloomy; and a Veil drawn over the face of the Sun. The Earth in a disposition every where to break into open flames. The tops of the Mountains smoaking; the Rivers dry; Earth-quakes in several places; the Sea sunk and retir'd into its deepest Chanel, and roaring, as against some mighty storm. These things will make the day dead and melancholy; but the Night-Scenes will have more of horrour in them. When the *Blazing-Stars* appear, like so many Furies, with their lighted Torches, threatning to set all on fire. For I do not doubt but the Comets will bear a part in this Tragedy, and have something extraordinary in them, at that time; either as to number, or bigness, or nearness to the Earth. Besides, the Air will be full of flaming Meteors, of unusual forms and magnitudes; Balls of fire rowling in the Skie, and pointed lightnings darted against the Earth; mixt with claps of thunder, and unusual noises from the Clouds. The Moon and the Stars will be confus'd and irregular, both in their light and motions; as if the whole frame of the Heavens was out of order, and all the laws of Nature were broken or expir'd.

When all things are in this languishing or dying posture, and the Inhabitants of the Earth under the fears of their last end; The Heavens will open on a sudden, and the Glory of God will appear. A Glory surpassing the Sun in its greatest radiancy; which, tho' we cannot describe, we may suppose it will bear some resemblance or proportion with those representations that are made in Scripture, of *God upon his Throne.* This wonder in the Heavens, whatsoever its form may be, will presently attract the eyes of all the Christian World. Nothing can more affect them than an object so unusual and so illustrious; and that, (probably) brings along with it their last destiny, and will put a period to all humane affairs.

Some of the Ancients have thought that this coming of our Saviour would be in the dead of the night, and his first glorious appearance in the midst of darkness. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10.

neſs. God is often deſcrib'd in Scripture as Light or Fire, with darkneſs round about him. *He bowed the*
Pſal. 18. 9, 11, *Heavens and came down, and darkneſs was under his feet.*
12. *He made darkneſs his ſecret place: His pavilion round*
Pſal. 97. *about him were dark Waters and thick Clouds of the Skies. At the brightneſs that was before him, the thick Clouds paſſed.* And when God appear'd upon Mount *Sinai,*
Deut. 4. 11. the *Mountain burnt with fire unto the midſt of Heaven*
Hebr. 12. 18. *with darkneſs, clouds, and thick darkneſs:* Or, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, with *blackneſs* and *darkneſs,* and *tempeſt.* Light is never more glorious than when ſurrounded with darkneſs; and it may be the Sun, at that time, will be ſo obſcure, as to make little diſtinction of Day and Night. But however this Divine Light over-bears and diſtinguiſhes it ſelf from common Light, tho' it be at Mid-day. 'Twas about Noon
Acts 22. 6. that the Light ſhin'd from Heaven and ſurrounded St. *Paul.* And 'twas on the Day-time that St. *Stephen*
Act. 7. 55, 56. ſaw the *Heavens opened; ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God.* This light, which flows from a more vital ſource, be it Day or Night, will always be predominant.

That appearance of God upon Mount *Sinai,* which we mention'd, if we reflect upon it, will help us a little to form an Idea of this laſt appearance. When God had declar'd, that he would come down in the ſight of the People; The Text ſays, *There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick Cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the Trumpet exceeding loud; ſo that all the people that was in the Camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a ſmoke, becauſe the Lord deſcended upon it in fire. And the ſmoke thereof aſcended as the ſmoke of a furnace, and the whole Mount quaked greatly.* If we look upon this Mount as an Epitome of the Earth, this appearance gives us an imperfect reſemblance of that which is to come. Here are the ſeveral parts or main ſtrokes of it; firſt, the Heavens and the Earth in ſmoke and fire, then the appearance of a Divine Glory, and the ſound of a Trumpet in the preſence of Angels. But as the ſecond coming of our Saviour is a Triumph over his Enemies, and an entrance into his Kingdom, and is acted upon the Theater of the whole Earth;

ſo

ſo we are to ſuppoſe, in proportion, all the parts and circumſtances of it, more great and magnificent.

When therefore this mighty God returns again to that Earth, where he had once been ill treated, not Mount *Sinai* only, but all the Mountains of the Earth, and all the Inhabitants of the World, will tremble at his preſence. At the firſt opening of the Heavens, the brightneſs of his Perſon will ſcatter the dark Clouds, and ſhoot ſtreams of light throughout all the Air. But that firſt appearance, being far from the Earth, will ſeem to be onely a great maſs of light, without any diſtinct form; till, by nearer approaches, this bright Body ſhows it ſelf to be an Army of Angels, with this King of kings for their Leader. Then you may imagine how guilty Mankind will tremble and be aſtoniſh'd; and while they are gazing at this heavenly Hoſt, the Voice of the *Archangel is heard*, the ſhrill ſound of the Trumpet reaches their ears. And this gives the general Alarum to all the World. *For he cometh, for he cometh*, they cry, *to judge the Earth.* The crucified God is return'd in Glory, to take Vengeance upon his Enemies: Not onely upon thoſe that pierc'd his Sacred Body, with Nails and with a Spear, at *Jeruſalem*; but thoſe alſo that pierce him every day by their prophaneneſs and hard ſpeeches, concerning his Perſon and his Religion. Now they ſee that God whom they have mock'd, or blaſphem'd, laugh't at his meanneſs, or at his vain threats; They ſee Him, and are confounded with ſhame and fear; and in the bitterneſs of their anguiſh and deſpair call for the Mountains to fall upon them. *Fly into the clefts of the Rocks, and into the Caves of the Earth, for fear of the Lord, and the glory of his Majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth.* *Iſa. 2. 19. Rev. 6. 16, 17.*

As it is not poſſible for us to expreſs or conceive the dread and majeſty of this appearance; ſo neither can we, on the other hand, expreſs the paſſions and conſternation of the People that behold it. Theſe things exceed the meaſures of humane affairs, and of humane thoughts; we have neither words, nor compariſons, to make them known by. The greateſt pomp and magnificence of the Emperors of the Eaſt, in their

Armies, in their triumphs, in their inaugurations, is but like the ſport and entertainment of Children, if compar'd with this Solemnity. When God condeſcends to an external glory, with a viſible Train and Equipage: When, from all the Provinces of his vaſt and boundleſs Empire, he ſummons his Nobles, as I may ſo ſay: The ſeveral orders of Angels and Arch-Angels, to attend his Perſon; tho' we cannot tell the form or manner of this Appearance, we know there is nothing in our experience, or in the whole hiſtory of this World, that can be a juſt repreſentation of the leaſt part of it. No Armies ſo numerous as the Hoſt of Heaven: and in the midſt of thoſe bright Legions, in a flaming Chariot, will ſit the Sun of Man, when he comes to be glorified in his Saints, and triumph over his Enemies. And inſtead of the wild noiſes of the rabble, which makes a great part of our worldly ſtate: This bleſſed Company will breath their *Halleluiahs* into the open Air; and repeated acclamations of *Salvation to God, which ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb. Now is come ſalvation and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt.*

Apoc. 7. 10. & 12. 10.

But I leave the reſt to our ſilent devotion and admiration. Onely give me leave, whilſt this object is before our eyes, to make a ſhort reflection upon the wonderful hiſtory of our Saviour; and the different ſtates, which that Sacred Perſon, within the compaſs of our knowledge, hath undergone. We now ſee him coming in the Clouds in glory and triumph, ſurrounded with innumerable Angels. This is the ſame Perſon, who, ſo many hundred Years ago, enter'd *Jeruſalem*, with another ſort of Equipage: mounted upon an Aſſe's Colt, while the little people and the multitude cry'd, *Hoſanna* to the *Son of David.* Nay, this is the ſame Perſon, that, at his firſt coming into this World, was laid in a Manger inſtead of a Cradle; A naked Babe dropt in a Crib at *Bethlehem*: His poor Mother not having wherewithall to get her a better Lodging, when ſhe was to be deliver'd of this Sacred burthen. This helpleſs Infant, that often wanted a little Milk to refreſh it, and ſupport its weakneſs: That hath often cry'd for the Breaſt, with hunger and tears:

Luke 2. 12.

now

now appears to be the Lord of Heaven and Earth. If this Divine Person had faln from the clouds in a mortal Body, cloath'd with Flesh and Bloud, and spent his life here amongst sinners; that alone had been an infinite condescension. But as if it had not been enough to take upon him humane Nature, he was content, for many months, to live the life of an Animal, or of a Plant, in the dark cell of a woman's Womb. *This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Neither is this all that is wonderful in the story of our Saviour. If the manner of his death be compar'd with his present glory, we shall think, either the one, or the other, incredible. Look up, first, into the Heavens: see how they bow under him, and receive a new light from the Glory of his Presence. Then look down upon the Earth, and see a naked Body hanging upon a cursed Tree in *Golgotha*: crucified betwixt two Thieves: wounded, spit upon, mock'd, abus'd. Is it possible to believe that one and the same person can act or suffer such different parts? That he, that is now Lord and Master of all Nature: not only of Death and Hell, and the powers of darkness: but of all Principalities in heavenly places: is the same Infant Jesus, the same crucified Jesus, of whose life and death the Christian records give us an account? The History of this person is the Wonder of this World; and not of this World only, but of the Angels above, that desire to look into it. *1 Pet. 1. 11, 12.*

Let us now return to our subject. We left the Earth in a languishing condition, ready to be made a Burnt-offering, to appease the wrath of its offended Lord. When *Sodom* was to be destroy'd, *Abraham* interceded with God that he would spare it for the Righteous sake: And *David* interceded to save his guiltless People from God's Judgments and the Destroying Angel. But here is no Intercessor for mankind in this last extremity: None to interpose where the Mediator of our Peace is the party offended. Shall then *the righteous perish with the wicked? Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Or if the Righteous be translated and delivered from This Fire, *Gen. 18.* *2 Sam. 24. 17*

what ſhall become of innocent children and Infants? Muſt theſe all be given up to the mercileſs flames, as a Sacrifice to *Moloch*? and their tender fleſh, like burnt incenſe, ſend up fumes to feed the noſtrils of evil Spirits? Can the God of *Iſrael* ſmell a ſweet ſavour from ſuch Sacrifices? The greater half of mankind is made up of Infants and Children: and if the wicked be deſtroyed, *yet theſe Lambs, what have they done?* are there no bowels of compaſſion for ſuch an harmleſs multitude? But we leave them to their Guardian
Matt. 18.10. Angels, and to that Providence which watches over all things.

It only remains therefore, to let fall that Fire from Heaven, which is to conſume this Holocauſt. Imagine all Nature now ſtanding in a ſilent expectation to receive its laſt doom: The Tutelary and Deſtroying Angels to have their inſtructions: Every thing to be ready for the fatal hour: And then, after a little ſilence, all the Hoſt of Heaven to raiſe their voice and ſing aloud, *LET GOD ARISE: Let his enemies be ſcattered. As ſmoak is driven away, ſo drive them away: As wax melteth before the fire, ſo LET the wicked periſh at the preſence of God.* And upon this, as upon a ſignal given, all the ſublunary World breaks into Flames, and all the Treaſuries of Fire are open'd, in Heaven and in Earth.

Thus the Conflagration begins. If one ſhould now go about to repreſent *the World on Fire*, with all the confuſions that neceſſarily muſt be, in Nature and in Mankind, upon that occaſion, it would ſeem to moſt men a Romantick Scene. Yet we are ſure there muſt be ſuch a Scene. *The heavens will paſs away with a noiſe, and the Elements will melt with fervent heat, and all the works of the Earth will be burnt up.* And theſe things cannot come to paſs without the greateſt diſorders imaginable, both in the minds of Men and in external Nature: and the ſaddeſt ſpectacles that eye can behold. We think it a great matter to ſee a ſingle perſon burnt alive: here are Millions, ſhrieking in the flames at once. 'Tis frightful to us to look upon a great City in flames, and to ſee the diſtractions and miſery of the people: here is an Univerſal

Fire

Fire through all the Cities of the Earth, and an Universal Maſſacre of their Inhabitants. Whatſoever the Prophets foretold of the deſolations of *Judea*, *Jeruſalem*, or *Babylon*, in the higheſt ſtrains, is more than literally accompliſh'd in this laſt and general Calamity: And thoſe only that are Spectators of it, can make its Hiſtory. *Iſa. 24. Jer. 51. Lament.*

The diſorders in Nature and the inanimate World will be no leſs, nor leſs ſtrange and unaccountable, than thoſe in Mankind. Every Element, and every Region, ſo far as the bounds of this Fire extend, will be in a tumult and a fury, and the whole habitable World running into confuſion. A World is ſooner deſtroyed than made, and Nature relapſes haſtily into that Chaos-ſtate, out of which ſhe came by ſlow and leiſurely motions. As an Army advances into the field by juſt and regular marches, but when it is broken and routed, it flies with precipitation, and one cannot deſcribe its poſture. Fire is a barbarous Enemy, it gives no mercy; there is nothing but fury, and rage, and ruine, and deſtruction, whereſoever it prevails. A ſtorm or *Hurricano*, tho' it be but the force of Air, makes a ſtrange havock where it comes; but devouring flames, or exhalations ſet on Fire, have ſtill a far greater violence, and carry more terror along with them. Thunder and Earthquakes are the Sons of Fire: and we know nothing in all Nature, more impetuous, or more irreſiſtibly deſtructive than theſe two. And accordingly in this laſt war of the Elements, we may be ſure, they will bear their parts, and do great execution in the ſeveral regions of the World. Earthquakes and Subterraneous Eruptions will tear the body and bowels of the Earth; and Thunders and convulſive motions of the Air, rend the Skies. The waters of the Sea will boyl and ſtruggle with ſtreams of Sulphur that run into them; which will make them fume, and ſmoke, and roar, beyond all ſtorms and tempeſts. And theſe noiſes of the Sea will be anſwered again from the Land by falling Rocks and Mountains. This is a ſmall part of the diſorders of that day.

But 'tis not poſſible, from any ſtation, to have a full proſpect of this laſt Scene of the Earth: for 'tis a mixture of fire and darkneſs. This new Temple is fill'd with ſmoak, while it is conſecrating, and none can enter into it. But I am apt to think, if we could look down upon this burning World from above the Clouds, and have a full view of it, in all its parts, we ſhould think it a lively repreſentation of *Hell* it ſelf. For, Fire and darkneſs are the two chief things by which that ſtate, or that place, uſes to be deſcrib'd: and they are both here mingled together: with all other ingredients that make that Tophet that is prepar'd of old. *Iſa.* 30. Here are Lakes of fire and brimſtone: Rivers of melted glowing matter: Ten thouſand Volcano's vomiting flames all at once. Thick darkneſs, and Pillars of ſmoke twiſted about with wreaths of flame, like fiery Snakes. Mountains of Earth thrown up into the Air, and the Heavens dropping down in lumps of fire. Theſe things will all be literally true, concerning that day, and that ſtate of the Earth. And if we ſuppoſe *Beelzebub*, and his Apoſtate crew, in the midſt of this fiery furnace: (and I know not where they can be elſe.) It will be hard to find any part of the Univerſe, or any ſtate of things, that anſwers to ſo many of the properties and characters of *Hell*, as this which is now before us.

But if we ſuppoſe the ſtorm over, and that the fire hath got an entire victory over all other bodies, and ſubdued every thing to it ſelf, the Conflagration will end in a Deluge of fire: Or, in a Sea of fire, covering the whole Globe of the Earth. For, when the exterior region of the Earth is melted into a fluor, like molten glaſs, or running metal; it will, according to the nature of other Fluids, fill all vacuities and depreſſions, and fall into a regular ſurface, at an equal diſtance, every where, from its center. This Sea of fire, like the firſt Abyſs, will cover the face of the whole Earth: make a kind of ſecond Chaos: and leave a capacity for another World to riſe from it. But that is not our preſent buſineſs. Let us onely, if you pleaſe, to take leave of this ſubject, reflect upon this occaſion, on the Vanity and tranſient glory of all

this

this habitable World. How, by the force of one Element, breaking looſe upon the reſt, all the Varieties of Nature, all the works of Art, all the labours of Men are reduc'd to nothing. All that we admir'd and ador'd before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated or vaniſh'd. And another form and face of things, plain, ſimple, and every where the ſame, overſpreads the whole Earth. Where are now the great Empires of the World, and their great Imperial Cities? Their Pillars, Trophees, and Monuments of glory? Show me where they ſtood: read the Inſcription, tell me the Victor's name. What remains, what impreſſions, what difference or diſtinction do you ſee in this maſs of fire? *Rome* it ſelf, *Eternal Rome*, the Great City, the Empreſs of the World, whoſe domination and ſuperſtition, *ancient and modern*, make a great part of the hiſtory of this Earth: What is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her Palaces were ſtrong and ſumptuous: *She glorified her ſelf, and liv'd deliciouſly: and ſaid in her heart, I ſit a Queen, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow.* But her hour is come, ſhe is wip'd away from the face of the Earth, and buried in everlaſting oblivion. But 'tis not Cities onely, and works of men's hands, but the everlaſting Hills, the Mountains and Rocks of the Earth, are melted as Wax before the Sun; and *their place is no where found.* Here ſtood the *Alpes*, a prodigious range of Stone, the Load of the Earth, that cover'd many Countries, and reach'd their armes from the Ocean to the *Black Sea*; This huge maſs of Stone is ſoften'd and diſſolv'd, as a tender Cloud into rain. Here ſtood the *African* Mountains, and *Atlas* with his top above the Clouds. There was frozen *Caucaſus*, and *Taurus*, and *Imaus*, and the Mountains of *Aſia*. And yonder towards the North ſtood the *Riphæan* Hills, cloath'd in Ice and Snow. All theſe are vaniſh'd, dropt away as the Snow upon their heads: and ſwallowed up in a red Sea of fire. *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty: Juſt and true are thy ways, Thou King of Saints.* Hallelujah. Revel. 15. 3.

THE

THE CONCLUSION.

IF the Conflagration of the World be a reality, as, both by Scripture and Antiquity, we are aſſur'd it is: If we be fully perſwaded and convinc'd of this: 'Tis a thing of that nature, that we cannot keep it long in our thoughts, without making ſome moral reflections upon it. 'Tis both great in it ſelf, and of univerſal concern to all Mankind. Who can look upon ſuch an Object, *A World in Flames*, without thinking with himſelf, Whether ſhall I be in the midſt of theſe flames, or no? What is my ſecurity that I ſhall not fall under this fiery vengeance, which is the wrath of an angry God? St. *Peter*, when he had deliver'd the doctrine of the Conflagration, makes this pious reflection upon it: *Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolv'd, what manner of perſons ought you to be, in holy converſation and godlineſs?* The ſtrength of his argument depends chiefly upon what he had ſaid before in the *7th.* Verſe, where he told us, that the *preſent Heavens and Earth were reſerv'd unto fire, againſt the Day of Judgment, and the perdition of irreligious men.* We muſt avoid the crime then, if we would eſcape the puniſhment. But this expreſſion of *irreligious* or *ungodly men*, is ſtill very general. St. *Paul*, when he ſpeaks of this fiery indignation, and the Perſons it is to fall upon, is more diſtinct in their characters. He ſeems to mark out for this deſtruction, three ſorts of men chiefly, *The Atheiſts, Infidels, and the Tribe of Anti-chriſt.* Theſe are his words: *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God: and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Then as for Anti-chriſt and his adherents, he ſays, in the *2d.* Chapt. and *8th.* Verſe, *The Lord ſhall conſume that Wicked one with the Spirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy him with the brightneſs of his coming*, or of his Preſence. Theſe, you ſee, all refer to the ſame time with St. *Peter:* namely, to the coming of our Saviour,

2 *Epiſt.* 3.11.

2 *Theſſ.* 1.7,8.

at

at the Conflagration; and three ſorts of Perſons are characteriz'd as his Enemies, and ſet out for deſtruction at that time. Firſt, thoſe that know not God: that is, that acknowledge not God, that will not own the Deity. Secondly, thoſe that hearken not to the Goſpel; that is, that reject the Goſpel and Chriſtian Religion, when they are preach'd and made known to them. For you muſt not think that it is the poor barbarous and ignorant Heathens, that ſcarce ever heard of God, or the Goſpel, that are threaten'd with this fiery vengeance. No, 'tis the Heathens that live amongſt Chriſtians; thoſe that are Infidels, as to the exiſtence of God, or the truth of Chriſtian Religion, tho' they have had a full manifeſtation of both. Theſe are properly the Adverſaries of God and Chriſt. And ſuch adverſaries, St. *Paul* ſays in another place, *A fearful judgment, and fiery indignation ſhall devour:* which ſtill refers to the ſame time, and the ſame Perſons we are ſpeaking of. Then as to the third ſort of Men, Anti-chriſt and his Followers, beſides this Text of St. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*, 'tis plain to me in the Apocalypſe, that *Myſtical Babylon* is to be conſum'd by fire: and the *Beaſt* and *Falſe Prophet* to be thrown into the *Lake that burns with fire and brimſtone*: Which Lake is no where to be found till the Conflagration. *Heb.* 10, 27.

You ſee then for whom *Tophet* is prepar'd of old. For Atheiſts, Infidels, and Anti-chriſtian Perſecutors. And they will have for their Companions, the Devil and his Angels, the heads of the Apoſtaſie. Theſe are all in open rebellion againſt God and Chriſt, and at defiance, as it were, with Heaven. Excepting Anti-chriſt, who is rather in a ſecret conſpiracy, than an open rebellion. For, under a pretended Commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt, He perſecutes his Servants, diſhonours his Perſon, corrupts his Laws and his Government, and makes War againſt his Saints. And this is a greater affront and provocation, if poſſible, than a bare-fac'd oppoſition would be.

There are other Men, beſides theſe, that are unacceptable to God: All ſorts of ſinners and wicked perſons: but they are not ſo properly the Enemies of God, as theſe we have mention'd. An intemperate Man is

an Enemy to himſelf, and an injuſt Man is an Enemy to his Neighbour: But thoſe that deny God, or Chriſt, or perſecute their Servants, are directly and immediately Enemies to God. And therefore when the Lord comes in flames of fire to triumph over his Enemies: To take vengeance upon all that are Rebels or Conſpirators againſt him and his Chriſt; theſe Monſters of Men will be the firſt and moſt exemplary Objects of the divine wrath and indignation.

To undertake to ſpeak to theſe three Orders of men, and convince them of their errour, and the danger of it, would be too much for the Concluſion of a ſhort Treatiſe. And as for the third ſort, the Subjects of Antichriſt, none but the Learned amongſt them are allow'd to be inquiſitive, or to read ſuch things as condemn their Church, or the Governors of it. Therefore I do not expect that this Engliſh Tranſlation ſhould fall into many of their hands. But thoſe of them, that are pleas'd to look into the Latin, will find, in the Concluſion of it, a full and fair warning to come out of *Babylon*: which is there prov'd to be the Church of *Rome*. Then as to thoſe that are Atheiſtically inclin'd, which I am willing to believe are not many, I deſire them to conſider, How mean a thing it is, to have hopes onely in this Life: and how uneaſie a thing, to have nothing but fears as to the Future. Thoſe, ſure, muſt be little narrow Souls, that can make themſelves a portion and a ſufficiency out of what they enjoy here: That think of no more, that deſire no more. For what is this life, but a circulation of little mean actions? We lie down and riſe again: dreſs and undreſs: feed and wax hungry: work, or play, and are weary: and then we lie down again, and the circle returns. We ſpend the day in trifles, and when the Night comes, we throw our ſelves into the Bed of folly, amongſt dreams and broken thoughts and wild imaginations. Our reaſon lies a-ſleep by us; and we are, for the time, as arrant Brutes, as thoſe that ſleep in the Stalls, or in the Field. Are not the Capacities of Man higher than theſe? and ought not his ambition and expectations to be greater? Let us be Adventurers for another World: 'Tis, at leaſt, a fair

and noble Chance: and there is nothing in this, worth our thoughts or our paſſions. If we ſhould be diſappointed, we are ſtill no worſe than the reſt of our fellow-mortals: and if we ſucceed in our expectations, we are eternally happy.

For my part, I cannot be perſwaded, that any man of Atheiſtical inclinations can have a great and generous Soul. For there is nothing great in the World, if you take God out of it. Therefore ſuch a perſon can have no great thought, can have no great aims, or expectations, or deſigns: for all muſt lie within the compaſs of this Life, and of this dull Body. Neither can he have any great inſtincts or noble paſſions: For if he had, they would naturally excite in him greater Ideas, inſpire him with higher notions, and open the Scenes of the Intellectual World. Laſtly, He cannot have any great ſence of Order, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Providence, or any of the Divine Perfections. And theſe are the greateſt things that can enter into the thoughts of man, and that do moſt enlarge and ennoble his mind. And therefore I ſay again, That, He that is naturally inclined to Atheiſm, being alſo naturally deſtitute of all theſe, muſt have a little and narrow ſoul.

But you'l ſay, it may be, This is to expoſtulate rather than to prove: or to upbraid us with our make and temper, rather than to convince us of an error in ſpeculation. 'Tis an error it may be in practice, or in point of prudence; but we ſeek Truth, whether it make for us or againſt us: convince us therefore by juſt reaſoning and direct arguments, that there is a God, and then wee'l endeavour to correct theſe defects in our natural complexion. You ſay well; and therefore I have endeavour'd to do this before, in another part of this Theory, in the *Second Book, ch.* 11. Concerning the *Author of Nature:* where you may ſee, that the Powers of Nature, or of the Material World, cannot anſwer all the Phænomena of the Univerſe, which are there repreſented. This you may conſult at leiſure. But, in the mean time, 'tis a good perſwaſive why we ſhould not eaſily give our ſelves up to ſuch inclinations or opinions, as have

neither generoſity, nor prudence on their ſide. And it cannot be amiſs, that theſe perſons ſhould often take into their thoughts, this laſt ſcene of things, The *Conflagration* of the World. Seeing if there be a God, they will certainly be found in the number of his Enemies, and of thoſe that will have their portion in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone.

The Third ſort of perſons that we are to ſpeak to, are the Incredulous, or ſuch as do not believe the truth of *Chriſtian Religion*, tho' they believe there is a God. Theſe are commonly men of Wit and Pleaſure, that have not patience enough to conſider, coolely and in due order, the grounds upon which it appears, that Chriſtian Religion is from Heaven, and of Divine Authority. They ought, in the firſt place, to examine *matter of Fact*, and the Hiſtory of our Saviour: That there was ſuch a Perſon, in the Reigns of *Auguſtus* and *Tiberius*, that wrought ſuch and ſuch Miracles in *Judæa*; taught ſuch a Doctrine: was Crucified at *Jeruſalem*: riſe from the dead the Third Day, and viſibly aſcended into Heaven. If theſe matters of Fact be denied, then the controverſie turns only to an Hiſtorical queſtion, *Whether* the Evangelical Hiſtory be a fabulous, or true Hiſtory: which it would not be proper to examine in this place. But if matter of Fact recorded there, and in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, be acknowledged, as I ſuppoſe it is, then the Queſtion that remains is this, *Whether* ſuch matter of Fact does not ſufficiently prove the divine authority of Jeſus Chriſt and of his Doctrine. We ſuppoſe it poſſible, for a perſon to have ſuch Teſtimonials of divine authority, as may be ſufficient to convince Mankind, or the more reaſonable part of Mankind; And if that be poſſible, what, pray, is a-wanting in the Teſtimonies of Jeſus Chriſt? The Prophecies of the Old Teſtament bear witneſs to him: His Birth was a miracle, and his Life a train of Miracles: not wrought out of levity and vain oſtentation, but for uſeful and charitable purpoſes. His Doctrine and Morality not only blameleſs, but Noble: deſigned to

remove

remove out of the World the imperfect Religion of the *Jews*, and the falſe Religion of the *Gentiles*: All Idolatry and Superſtition: and thereby to improve Mankind, under a better and more perfect diſpenſation. He gave an example of a ſpotleſs innocency in all his Converſation, free from Vice or any evil; and liv'd in a neglect of all the Pomp or Pleaſures of this Life, referring his happineſs wholly to another World. He Propheſied concerning his own Death, and his Reſurrection: and concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: which all came to paſs in a ſignal manner. He alſo Propheſied of the Succeſs of his Goſpel: which, after his Death, immediately took root, and ſpread it ſelf every way throughout the World: maugre all oppoſition or perſecution, from *Jews* or *Heathens*. It was not ſupported by any temporal power for above three hundred Years: nor were any arts us'd, or meaſures taken, according to humane prudence, for the conſervation of it. But, to omit other things, That grand article of his Riſing from the Dead, Aſcending viſibly into Heaven, and pouring down the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, (according as he had promis'd) upon his Apoſtles and their followers: This alone is to me a Demonſtration of his Divine Authority. To conquer Death: To mount, like an Eagle, into the Skies: and to inſpire his followers with inimitable gifts and faculties, are things, without controverſie, beyond all humane power: and may and ought be eſteemed ſure Credentials of a perſon ſent from Heaven.

From theſe matters of Fact we have all poſſible aſſurance, that Jeſus Chriſt was no Impoſtor or deluded perſon: (one of which two Characters all unbelievers muſt fix upon him) but Commiſſion'd by Heaven to introduce a New Religion: to reform the World: to remove Judaiſm and Idolatry; The Beloved Son of God, the great Prophet of the later Ages, the True Meſſiah that was to come.

It may be you will confeſs, that theſe are great arguments that the Author of our Religion was a Divine Perſon, and had ſupernatural powers: but withal, that there are ſo many difficulties in Chriſtian Reli-

Religion, and ſo many things unintelligible, that a rational man knows not how to believe it, tho' he be inclin'd to admire the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. I anſwer, If they be ſuch difficulties as are made only by the Schools and diſputacious Doctors, you are not to trouble your ſelf about them, for they are of no Authority. But if they be in the very words of Scripture, then 'tis either in things practical, or in things meerly ſpeculative. As to the Rules of Practice in Chriſtian Religion, I do not know any thing in Scripture, obſcure or unintelligible. And as to Speculations, great diſcretion and moderation is to be us'd in the conduct of them. If theſe matters of Fact, which we have alledg'd, prove the Divinity of the Revelation, keep cloſe to the Words of that Revelation, aſſerting no more than it aſſerts, and you cannot err. But if you will expatiate, and determine modes, and forms, and conſequences; you may eaſily be puzled by your own forwardneſs. For beſides ſome things that are, in their own nature, Infinite and Incomprehenſible, there are many other things in Chriſtian Religion that are incompleatly reveal'd; the full knowledge whereof, it has pleaſed God to reſerve to another life, and to give us only a ſummary account of them at preſent. We have ſo much deference for any Government, as not to expect that all their Councels and ſecrets ſhould be made known to us, nor to cenſure every action whoſe reaſons we do not fully comprehend; much more in the Providential adminiſtration of a World, we muſt be content to know ſo much of the Councels of Heaven and of ſupernatural Truths, as God has thought fit to reveal to us. And if theſe Truths be no otherwiſe than in a general manner, ſummarily and incompleatly revealed in this life, as commonly they are, we muſt not therefore throw off the Government, or reject the whole Diſpenſation: of whoſe Divine Authority we have otherways full proof and ſatisfactory evidence. For this would be, To loſe the Subſtance in catching at a Shadow.

But

But Men that live continually in the noiſe of the World, amidſt buſineſs and pleaſures, their time is commonly ſhar'd betwixt thoſe two. So that little or nothing is left for Meditation; at leaſt, not enough for ſuch Meditations as require length, juſtneſs, and order. They ſhould retire from the crowd for one Month or two, to ſtudy the truth of Chriſtian Religion, if they have any doubt of it. They retire ſometimes to cure a Gout, or other Diſeaſes, and diet themſelves according to rule: but they will not be at that pains, to cure a diſeaſe of the mind, which is of far greater and more fatal conſequence. If they periſh by their own negligence or obſtinacy, the Phyſician is not to blame. Burning is the laſt remedy in ſome diſtempers: and they would do well to remember, that the World will flame about their heads one of theſe days: and whether they be amongſt the Living, or amongſt the Dead, at that time, the Apoſtle makes them a part of the Fewel, which that fiery vengeance will prey upon. Our Saviour hath been true to his word hitherto: whether in his promiſes, or in his threatnings; He promis'd the Apoſtles to ſend down the Holy Ghoſt upon them after his Aſcenſion, and that was fully accompliſh'd. He foretold and threaten'd the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: and that came to paſs accordingly, ſoon after he had left the World. And he hath told us alſo, that he will come again in *the Clouds of Heaven, with power and great glory*; and that will be to judge the World. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his glory. And before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations,* and he will ſeparate the good from the bad; and to the wicked and unbelievers he will ſay, *Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* This is the ſame Coming, and the ſame Fire, with that which we mention'd before out of St. *Paul.* As you will plainly ſee, if you compare St. *Matthew*'s words with St. *Paul*'s, which are theſe, *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty Angels: In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that hearken not to the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Who ſhall*

Matt. 24. 30. & 25. 31, &c.

Ver. 41.

2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7, 8, 9.

ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from, or by the preſence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. This, me-thinks, ſhould be an awakening thought, that there is ſuch a threatening upon record, (by one who never yet fail'd in his word) againſt thoſe that do not believe his Teſtimony. Thoſe that reject him now as a Dupe, or an Impoſtor, run a hazard of ſeeing him hereafter coming in the Clouds to be their Judge. And it will be too late then to correct their errour, when the bright Armies of Angels fill the Air, and the Earth begins to melt at the Preſence of the Lord.

Thus much concerning thoſe three ranks of Men, whom the Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſeems to point at principally, and condemn to the flames. But, as I ſaid before, the reſt of ſinners and vitious Perſons amongſt the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, tho' they are not ſo directly the Enemies of God, as theſe are; yet being tranſgreſſors of his Law, they muſt expect to be brought to Juſtice. In every well-govern'd State, not onely Traitors and Rebels, that offend more immediately againſt the Perſon of the Prince, but all others, that notoriouſly violate the Laws, are brought to condign puniſhment, according to the nature and degree of their crime. So in this caſe, *The fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is.* 'Tis therefore the concern of every man to reflect often upon that Day, and to conſider what his fate and ſentence is likely to be, at that laſt Trial. The *Jews* have a Tradition that *Elias* ſits in Heaven, and keeps a Regiſter of all Mens actions, good or bad. He hath his Under-Secretaries for the ſeveral Nations of the World, that take minutes of all that paſſes: and ſo hath the hiſtory of every man's life before him, ready to be produc'd at the Day of Judgment. I will not vouch for the literal truth of this, but it is true in effect. Every man's fate ſhall be determin'd that Day, according to the hiſtory of his life: according to the works done in the fleſh, whether good or bad. And therefore it ought to have as much influence upon us, as if every ſingle action was formally regiſter'd in Heaven.

If

If Men would learn to contemn this World, it would cure a great many Vices at once. And, methinks, St. *Peter*'s argument, from the approaching diſſolution of all things, ſhould put us out of conceit with ſuch periſhing vanities. Luſt and Ambition are the two reigning Vices of great Men: and thoſe little fires might be ſoon extinguiſh'd, if they would frequently and ſeriouſly meditate on this laſt and univerſal Fire; which will put an end to all paſſions and all contentions. As to Ambition, the Heathens themſelves made uſe of this argument, to abate and repreſs the vain affectation of glory and greatneſs in this World. I told you before the leſſon that was given to *Scipio Africanus*, by his Uncle's Ghoſt, upon this Subject. And upon a like occaſion and conſideration, *Cæſar* hath a leſſon given him by *Lucan*, after the Battle of *Pharſalia*; where *Pompey* loſt the day, and *Rome* its liberty. The Poet ſays, *Cæſar* took pleaſure in looking upon the dead Bodies, and would not ſuffer them to be buried, or, which was their manner of burying, to be burnt. Whereupon he ſpeaks to Him in theſe words: P. 15.

Hos, Cæſar, populos ſi nunc non uſſerit Ignis,
Uret cum Terris, uret cum gurgite Ponti.
Communis mundo ſupereſt Rogus, Oſſibus aſtra
Miſturus. Quocunque Tuam Fortuna vocabit,
Hæ quoque eunt Animæ; non altiùs ibis in auras,
Non meliore loco Stygiâ ſub nocte jacebis.
Libera fortuna Mors eſt: Capit omnia Tellus
Quæ genuit: Cælo tegitur Qui non habet urnam.

Cæſar,

If now theſe Bodies want their fire and urn,
At laſt, with the whole Globe, they'l ſurely burn.
The World expects one general Fire: and Thou
Muſt go where theſe poor Souls are wand'ring now.
Thou'l reach no higher, in th' Ethereal plain,
Nor 'mongſt the ſhades a better place obtain.
Death equals all: And He that has not room
To make a Grave, Heav'ns Vault ſhall be his Tomb.

Theſe are mortifying thoughts to ambitious Spirits. And ſurely our own Mortality, and the Mortality of the World it ſelf, may be enough to convince all conſidering Men, That, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity under the Sun*: any otherwiſe than as they relate to a better Life.

F I N I S.

THE

THEORY

OF THE

EARTH:

Containing an Account

OF THE

Original of the Earth,

AND OF ALL THE

GENERAL CHANGES

Which it hath already undergone,

OR

IS TO UNDERGO,

Till the CONSUMMATION of all Things.

THE FOURTH BOOK,

Concerning the NEW HEAVENS and NEW EARTH,

AND

Concerning the CONSUMMATION *of all Things.*

LONDON,

Printed by *R. Norton*, for *Walter Kettilby*, at the Bishop's-Head in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1690.

EARTH:

OR THE

THEORY

OF THE

GENERAL CHANGES

AND OF ALL THE

Glorious Appearances

IN THE

CONFLAGRATION of the EARTH.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

YOU see it is still my lot, to travel into New Worlds: having never found any great satisfaction in this. As an active people leaves their habitations in a barren soil, to try if they can make their fortune better elsewhere. I first lookt backwards, and waded through the Deluge, into the Primæval World: to see how they liv'd there, and how Nature stood in that original constitution. Now I am going forwards, to view the New Heavens *and* New Earth, *that will be after the Conflagration. But,* Gentle Reader, *let me not take you any further, if you be weary. I do not love a querulous Companion. Unless your Genius therefore press you forwards, chuse rather to rest here, and be content with that part of the Theory which you have seen already. Is it not fair, to have followed Nature so far as to have seen her twice in her ruines? Why should we still pursue her, even after death and dissolution, into dark and remote Futurities? To whom therefore such disquisitions seem needless, or over-curious, let them rest here; and leave the remainder of this Work, which is a* PROPHECY concerning the STATE of things after the Conflagration, *to those that are of a disposition suited to such studies and enquiries.*

Not that any part of this Theory requires much Learning, Art, or Science, to be Master of it; But a love and thirst after Truth, freedom of Judgment, and a resignation of our Understandings to clear Evidence, let it carry us which way it will. An honest English Reader *that looks only at the Sence as it lies before him, and neither considers nor cares whether it be New or Old, so it be true, may be a more competent Judge than a great Scholar full of his own Notions, and puff'd up with the opinion of his mighty knowledge. For such men think they cannot in honour*

own any thing to be true, which they did not know before. To be taught any new knowledge, is to confeſs their former ignorance; and that leſſens them in their own opinion, and, as they think, in the opinion of the World; which are both uneaſie reflections to them. Neither muſt we depend upon age only for ſoundneſs of Judgment: We ſeldom change our Opinions after threeſcore: eſpecially if they be leading Opinions. It is then too late, we think, to begin the World again; and as we grow old, the Heart contracts, and cannot open wide enough to take in a great thought.

The Spheres of mens Underſtandings are as different, as Proſpects upon the Earth. Some ſtand upon a Rock or a Mountain, and ſee far round about; Others are in an hollow, or in a Cave, and have no proſpect at all. Some men conſider nothing but what is preſent to their Senſes: Others extend their thoughts both to what is paſt and what is future. And yet the faireſt proſpect in this Life is not to be compar'd to the leaſt we ſhall have in another. Our cleareſt day here, is miſty and hazy: We ſee not far, and what we do ſee is in a bad light. But when we have got better Bodies in the firſt Reſurrection, whereof we are going to Treat; better Senſes and a better Underſtanding, a clearer light and an higher ſtation, our Horizon will be enlarg'd every way, both as to the Natural World and as to the Intellectual.

Two of the greateſt Speculations that we are capable of in this Life, are, in my Opinion, The REVOLUTION OF WORLDS, and the REVOLUTION OF SOULS; one for the Material World, and the other for the Intellectual. Toward the former of theſe Our Theory is an Eſſay: and in this our Planet, (which I hope to conduct into a Fix'd Star, before I have done with it) we give an inſtance of what may be in other Planets. 'Tis true, we took our riſe no higher than the Chaos: becauſe that was a known principle, and we were not willing to amuſe the Reader *with too many ſtrange Stories: as that, I am ſure, would have been thought one, TO HAVE brought this Earth from a Fix'd Star, and then carried it up again into the ſame Sphere. Which yet I believe, is the true circle of Natural Providence.*

As to the Revolution *of* Souls, *the footsteps of that Speculation are more obscure than of the former. For tho' we are assur'd by Scripture, that all good Souls will at length have Celestial Bodies; yet, that this is a returning to a Primitive State, or to what they had at their first Creation, that, Scripture has not acquainted us with. It tells us indeed that Angels fell from their Primitive Celestial Glory; and consequently we might be capable of a lapse as well as they, if we had been in that high condition with them. But that we ever were there, is not declared to us by any revelation. Reason and Morality would indeed suggest to us, that an innocent Soul, fresh and pure from the hands of its Maker, could not be immediately cast into Prison, before it had, by any act of its own Will, or any use of its own Understanding, committed either error or sin. I call this Body a Prison, both because it is a confinement and restraint upon our best Faculties and Capacities, and is also the seat of diseases and loathsomness; and, as prisons use to do, commonly tends more to debauch mens Natures, than to improve them.*

But tho' we cannot certainly tell under what circumstances humane Souls were plac'd at first, yet all Antiquity agrees, Oriental and Occidental, concerning their pre-existence in general, in respect of these mortal Bodies. And our Saviour never reproaches or corrects the Jews, *when they speak upon that supposition,* Luk. 9. 18, 19. Joh. 9. 2. *Besides, it seems to me beyond all controversie, that the Soul of the Messiah did exist before the Incarnation, and voluntarily descended from Heaven to take upon it a Mortal Body. And tho' it does not appear that all humane Souls were at first plac'd in Glory, yet, from the example of our Saviour, we see something greater in them: Namely, a capacity to be united to the Godhead. And what is possible to one, is possible to more. But these thoughts are too high for us: while we find our selves united to nothing, but diseased bodies and houses of clay.*

Joh. 3. 13. & 6. 38. & 62. & 17. 5.

The greatest fault we can commit in such Speculations, is to be over-positive and Dogmatical. To be inquisitive into the ways of Providence and the works of God, is so far from being a fault, that it is our greatest perfection; We cultivate the highest principles and best inclinations of our Nature, while we are thus employ'd: and 'tis littleness

neſs or ſecularity of Spirit, that is the greateſt Enemy to Contemplation. Thoſe that would have a true contempt of this World, muſt ſuffer the Soul to be ſometimes upon the Wing, and to raiſe her ſelf above the ſight of this little dark Point, which we now inhabit. Give her a large and free proſpect of the immenſity of God's works, and of his inexhauſted wiſdom and goodneſs, if you would make her Great and Good. As the Poet ſaid in his Rapture,

Give me a Soul ſo great, ſo high,
Let her dimenſions ſtretch the Skie.
That comprehends within a thought,
The whole extent 'twixt God and Nought.
And from the World's firſt birth and date,
Its Life and Death can calculate:
With all th' adventures that ſhall paſs,
To ev'ry Atome of the Maſs.

But let Her be as GOOD as GREAT,
Her higheſt Throne a Mercy-Seat.
Soft and diſſolving like a Cloud,
Loſing her ſelf in doing good.
A Cloud that leaves its place above,
Rather than dry, and uſeleſs move:
Falls in a ſhowre upon the Earth,
And gives ten thouſand Seeds a birth.
Hangs on the Flow'rs, and infant Plants,
Sucks not their Sweets, but feeds their Wants.
So let this mighty Mind diffuſe
All that's her own to others uſe;
And free from private ends, retain
Nothing of SELF, but a bare Name.

THE THEORY OF THE EARTH.

Book IV.

Concerning the new Heavens and new Earth,
AND
Concerning the Consummation of all things.

CHAP. I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

That the World will not be annihilated in the last Fire. That we are to expect, according to Scripture and the Christian doctrine, New Heavens and a new Earth, when these are dissolv'd or burnt up.

WE are now so far advanc'd in the Theory of the Earth, as to have seen the End of two Worlds: One destroy'd by Water, and another by Fire. It remains onely to consider, whether we be yet come to the final period of Nature: The last Scene of all things, and consequently the utmost bound of our enquiries. Or, whether Providence, which is inexhausted in wisdom and goodness, will raise up, from this dead Mass, New Heavens and

a New Earth. Another habitable World, better and more perfect than that which was deſtroyed. That, as the firſt World began with a Paradiſe, and a ſtate of Innocency, ſo the laſt may be a kind of Renovation of that happy ſtate; whoſe Inhabitants ſhall not die, but be tranſlated to a bleſſed Immortality.

I know 'tis the opinion of ſome, that this World will be annihilated, or reduc'd to nothing, at the Conflagration: and that would put an end to all further enquiries. But whence do they learn this? from Scripture, or Reaſon, or their own imagination? What inſtance or example can they give us, of this they call *Annihilation*? Or what place of Scripture can they produce, that ſays the World, in the laſt Fire, ſhall be reduc'd to nothing? If they have neither inſtance, nor proof of what they affirm, 'tis an empty Imagination of their own: neither agreeable to Philoſophy, nor Divinity. Fire does not conſume any ſubſtance: It changes the form and qualities of it, but the matter remains. And if the deſign had been *Annihilation*, the employing of fire would have been of no uſe or effect. For ſmoak and aſhes are at as great a diſtance from *Nothing*, as the bodies themſelves out of which they are made. But theſe Authors ſeem to have but a ſmall tincture of Philoſophy, and therefore it will be more proper to confute their opinion from the words of Scripture; which hath left us ſufficient evidence, that another World will ſucceed after the Conflagration of that we now inhabit.

The Prophets, both of the Old and New Teſtament, have left us their predictions concerning *New Heavens and a New Earth.* So ſays the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ch. 65. 17. *Behold I create New Heavens and a New Earth, and the former ſhall not be remembred, or come into mind.* As not worthy our thoughts, in compariſon of thoſe that will ariſe when theſe paſs away. So the Prophet S. *John*, in his *Apocalypſe*, when he was come to the end of this World, ſays, *And I ſaw a new heaven and a new earth. For the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away, and there was no more Sea.* Where he does not only give us an account

Apoc. 21. 1.

account of a New Heaven and a New Earth, in general: but also gives a distinctive character of the *New Earth*: that it shall have *no Sea*. And in the 5*th ver.* He that sat upon the Throne, says, *Behold I make all* things *New*; which, consider'd with the antecedents and consequents, cannot be otherwise understood than of a New World.

But some men make evasions here as to the words of the Prophets, and say they are to be understood in a figurate and allegorical sence: and to be applyed to the times of the Gospel, either at first or towards the latter end of the World. So as this *New Heaven and New Earth* signifie only a great change in the moral World. But how can that be, seeing S. *John* places them after the end of the World: and the Prophet *Isaiah* connects such things with his New Heavens and New Earth, as are not competible to the present state of Nature? However to avoid all shuffling and tergiversation in this point, let us appeal to S. *Peter*, who uses a plain literal style, and discourses down-right concerning the Natural World. In his 2*d Epist. and* 3*d chap.* when he had foretold and explained the Future Conflagration, he adds, But we expect *New Heavens and a New Earth according to his promises.* These Promises were made by the Prophets: and this gives us full authority to interpret their *New Heavens and New Earth* to be after the *Conflagration.* S. *Peter*, when he had describ'd the Dissolution of the World in the last Fire, in full and emphatical terms, as *the passing away of the Heavens with a noise: the melting of the Elements, and burning up all the works of the Earth:* he subjoyns, *Nevertheless*, notwithstanding this total dissolution of the present World, *We, according to his promises, look for new heavens and a new earth: wherein dwelleth Righteousness.* As if the Apostle should have said, Notwithstanding this strange and violent dissolution of the present Heavens and Earth, which I have described to you, we do not at all distrust God's Promises concerning New Heavens and a New Earth, that are to succeed these, and to be the seat of the Righteous. *ch. 65.*

Here's no room for Allegories or allegorical expoſitions: unleſs you will make the Conflagration of the World an Allegory. For, as Heavens and Earth were deſtroy'd, ſo Heavens and Earth are reſtored: and if in the firſt place you underſtand the natural material World, you muſt alſo underſtand it in the ſecond place: They are both Allegories, or neither. But to make the Conflagration an Allegory, is not only to contradict S. *Peter*, but all Antiquity, Sacred or Prophane. And I deſire no more aſſurance that we ſhall have New Heavens and a New Earth, in a literal Sence, than we have that the preſent Heavens and Earth ſhall be deſtroyed in a literal Sence, and by material Fire. Let it therefore reſt upon that iſſue, as to this firſt evidence and argument from Scripture.

Some will fancy, it may be, that we ſhall have New Heavens and Earth, and yet that theſe ſhall be annihilated; They would have Theſe firſt reduc'd to nothing, and then others created, ſpick and ſpan New, out of nothing. But why ſo, pray, what's the humour of that? leſt Omnipotency ſhould want employment, you would have it do, and undo, and do again. As if new-made Matter, like new Clothes, or new Furniture, had a better Gloſs, and was more creditable. Matter never wears: as fine Gold, melt it down never ſo often, it loſes nothing of its quantity. The ſubſtance of the World is the ſame, burnt or unburnt: and is of the ſame Value and Virtue, New or Old: and we muſt not multiply the actions of Omnipotency without neceſſity. God does not make, or unmake things, to try experiments: He knows before hand the utmoſt capacities of every thing, and does no vain or ſuperfluous work. Such imaginations as theſe proceed only from want of true Philoſophy, or the true knowledge of the Nature of God and of his Works; which ſhould always be carefully attended to, in ſuch Speculations as concern the Natural World. But to proceed in our Subject.

If they ſuppoſe part of the World to be annihilated, and to continue ſo, they Philoſophize ſtill worſe and worſe. How high ſhall this Annihilation reach? Shall

Shall the Sun, Moon, and Stars be reduc'd to nothing? but what have They done, that they ſhould undergo ſo hard a fate? muſt they be turn'd out of Being for our faults? The whole material Univerſe will not be Annihilated at this bout, for we are to have Bodies after the Reſurrection, and to live in Heaven. How much of the Univerſe then will you leave ſtanding: or how ſhall it ſubſiſt with this great *Vacuum* in the heart of it? This ſhell of a World is but the fiction of an empty Brain: For God and Nature in their works, never admit of ſuch gaping vacuities and emptineſſes.

If we conſult Scripture again, we ſhall find that that makes mention of a *Reſtitution* and *Reviviſcency* of all things: at the end of the World, or at the Coming of our Saviour. S. *Peter*, whoſe doctrine we have hitherto followed, in his Sermon to the *Jews* after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, tells them that He will come again, and that there will be then a *Reſtitution of all things*: ſuch as was promiſed by the Prophets. *The Heavens*, ſays he, *muſt receive him until the time of Reſtitution of all things: which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of his holy Prophets, ſince the world began.* If we compare this paſſage of S. *Peter's*, with that which we alledged before out of his ſecond Epiſtle, it can ſcarce be doubted but that he refers to the ſame Promiſes in both places: and what he there calls a *New Heaven* and a *New Earth*, he calls here a *Reſtitution of all things*. For the Heavens and the Earth comprehend all, and both theſe are but different phraſes for the Renovation of the World. This gives us alſo light how to underſtand what our Saviour calls the *Regeneration* or *Reviviſcency*, when he ſhall ſit upon his Throne of Glory, and will reward his followers an hundred fold, for all their loſſes in this World: beſides Everlaſting Life as the Crown of all. I know, in our Engliſh Tranſlation, we ſeparate *the Regeneration* from *ſitting upon his Throne*: but without any warrant from the Original. And ſeeing our Saviour ſpeaks here of Bodily goods, and ſeems to diſtinguiſh them from *everlaſting life*, which is to be the final reward of his Followers, This *Regeneration* ſeems to belong

Act. 3. *ver.* 21. *Matt.* 19. 28, 29.

belong to his Second coming, when the World ſhall be renew'd or regenerated: and the Righteous ſhall poſſeſs the Earth.

Other places of Scripture that foretel the fate of this material World, repreſent it always as a *Change*, not as an *Annihilation.* St. *Paul* ſays, *The Figure of this World paſſes away*: 1 Cor. 7. 31. The form, faſhion, and diſpoſition of its parts: but the ſubſtance ſtill remains. As a Body that is melted down and diſſolv'd, the Form periſhes, but the Matter is not deſtroy'd. *Pſal.* 102.26. And the Pſalmiſt ſays, The Heavens and the Earth ſhall be *chang'd*: which anſwers to this Transformation we ſpeak of. The ſame Apoſtle, in the Eight Chapter to the *Romans*, ſhows alſo that this *change* *Ver.* 21, 22, 23, 24. ſhall be, and ſhall be for the better: and calls it a *Deliverance of the Creation from vanity and corruption*: and a participation of the *glorious liberty of the Children of God.* Being a ſort of *Redemption*, as they have a *Redemption of their Bodies.*

But, ſeeing the *Renovation* of the World is a Doctrine generally receiv'd, both by ancient and modern Authors, as we ſhall have occaſion to ſhow hereafter: We need add no more, in this place, for confirmation of it. Some Men are willing to throw all things into a ſtate of *Nothing* at the Conflagration, and bury them there, that they may not be oblig'd to give an account of that ſtate of things, that is to ſucceed it. Thoſe who think themſelves bound in honour, to know every thing in Theology that is knowable: and find it uneaſie to anſwer ſuch queſtions and ſpeculations, as would ariſe upon their admitting a new World, think it more adviſeable to ſtifle it in the birth, and ſo to bound all knowledge at the Conflagration. But ſurely, ſo far as Reaſon or Scripture lead us, we may and ought to follow: otherwiſe we ſhould be ungrateful to Providence, that ſent us thoſe Guides. Provided, we be always duly ſenſible of our own weakneſs: and, according to the difficulty of the ſubject, and the meaſure of light that falls upon it, proceed with that modeſty and ingenuity, that becomes ſuch fallible enquirers after Truth, as we are. And this rule I deſire to preſcribe to my ſelf, as in all others

others Writings, ſo eſpecially in this: where, tho' I look upon the principal Concluſions as fully prov'd, there are ſeveral particulars, that are rather propos'd to examination, than poſitively aſſerted.

CHAP. II.

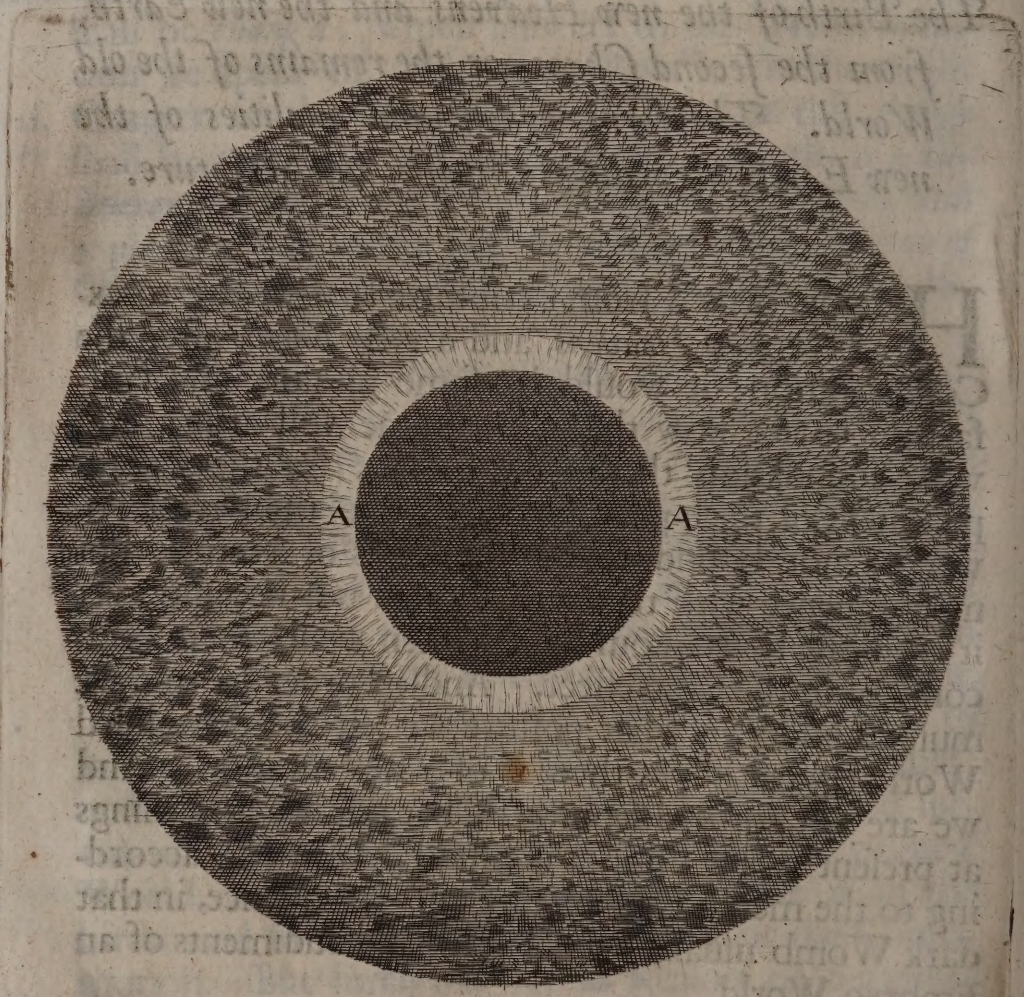
The Birth of the new Heavens and the new Earth, from the ſecond Chaos, or the remains of the old World. The form, order, and qualities of the new Earth, according to Reaſon and Scripture.

HAving prov'd from Scripture, that we are to expect *New Heavens*, and a *New Earth*, after the Conflagration; it would be ſome pleaſure and ſatisfaction to ſee how this new Frame will ariſe: and what foundation there is in Nature for the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes. For, tho' the Divine Power be not bound to all the Laws of Nature, but may diſpence with them when there is a neceſſity; yet it is an eaſe to us in our belief, when we ſee them both conſpire in the ſame effect. And in order to this, we muſt conſider in what poſture we left the demoliſh'd World: what hopes there is of a Reſtauration. And we are not to be diſcourag'd, becauſe we ſee things at preſent wrapt up in a confus'd Maſs: for, according to the methods of Nature and Providence, in that dark Womb uſually are the ſeeds and rudiments of an Embryo-World.

Neither is there, poſſibly, ſo great a confuſion in this Maſs, as we imagine. The Heart and interiour Body of the Earth is ſtill entire: and that part of it that is conſum'd by the fire, will be divided, of its own accord, into two Regions. What is diſſolv'd and melted, being the heavieſt, will deſcend as low as it can: and cover and encloſe the kernel of the Earth round about, as a molten Sea or Abyſs: according as

is

is explain'd and ſet down in the precedent Book. But what is more light and volatile, will float in the Air: as fumes, ſmoak, exhalations, vapours of Water, and whatſoever terreſtrial parts can be elevated and ſupported by the ſtrength of fire. Theſe all mingled together, of different ſizes, figures, and motions, will conſtitute an opake Cloud, or thick region of darkneſs round the Earth: So as the Globe of the Earth, with its Atmoſphere, after the Conflagration is finiſh'd, will ſtand in the form repreſented in this Scheme.



Now as to the lower of theſe two regions, the region of melted matter, A. A. we ſhall have little occaſion to take notice of it: ſeeing it will contribute nothing to the formation of the new World. But the upper region, or all above that Orb of fire, is the true draught of a Chaos: or a mixture and confuſion of all

all the Elements, without order or distinction. Here are particles of Earth, and of Air, and of Water, all promiscuously jumbled together, by the force and agitation of the fire. But when that force ceases, and every one is left to its own inclination, they will, according to their different degrees of gravity, separate and sort themselves after this manner. First, the heavyest and grossest parts of the Earth will subside; then the watery parts will follow; then a lighter sort of Earth; which will stop and rest upon the Surface of the Water, and compose there a thin film or membrane; this membrane or tender Orb is the first rudiment or foundation of a new habitable Earth. For according as terrestrial parts fall upon it, from all the regions and heighths of the Atmosphere, or of the Chaos, this Orb will grow more firm, strong, and immoveable: able to support it self and Inhabitants too. And having in it all the Principles of a fruitful Soil, whether for the production of Plants or of Animals, it will want no property or character of an habitable Earth. And particularly, will become such an Earth, and of such a form, as the first Paradisiacal Earth was. Which hath been fully describ'd in the first and second Books of this Theory.

There is no occasion of examining more accurately the formation of this Second Earth, seeing it is so much the same with that of the First; which is set down fully and distinctly in the 5*th.* Chapter of the first Book of this Theory. Nature here repeats the same work, and in the same method; onely the materials are now a little more refin'd and purg'd by the fire. They both rise out of a Chaos, and That, in effect, the same in both cases; For though in forming the first Earth, I suppos'd the Chaos or confus'd Mass to reach down to the Center, I did that onely for the ease of our imagination; that so the whole Mass might appear more simple and uniform. But in reality, that Chaos had a solid kernel of Earth within, as this hath; and that matter which fluctuated above in the regions of the Air, was the true Chaos, whose parts, when they came to a separation, made the several Elements, and the form of an habitable Earth betwixt the Air and

Water. This Chaos upon ſeparation, will fall into the ſame form and Elements: and ſo in like manner create or conſtitute a ſecond Paradiſiacal World.

I ſay a *Paradiſiacal* World: For it appears plainly, that this new-form'd Earth muſt agree with that Primigenial Earth, in the two principal and fundamental properties. Firſt, It is of an even, entire, uniform and regular Surface, without Mountains or Sea. Secondly, That it hath a ſtraight and regular ſituation to the Sun, and the *Axis* of the *Ecliptick*. From the manner of its formation, it appears manifeſtly, that it muſt be of an even and regular Surface. For the Orb of liquid fire, upon which the firſt deſcent was made, being ſmooth and uniform every where, the matter that fell upon it would take the ſame form and mould. And ſo the ſecond or third Region, that were ſuperinduc'd, would ſtill imitate the faſhion of the firſt: there being no cauſe or occaſion of any inequality. Then as to the ſituation of its *Axis*, this uniformity of figure would determine the center of its gravity to be exactly in the middle, and conſequently there would be no inclination of one Pole more than another to the general center of its motion; But, upon a free libration in the liquid Air, its *Axis* would lie parallel with the *Axis* of the Ecliptick where it moves. But theſe things having been deduc'd more fully in the ſecond Book about *Paradiſe* and *the Primigenial Earth*, they need no further explication in this place.

If Scripture had left us ſeveral diſtinct Characters of the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, we might, by compare with thoſe, have made a full proof of our Hypotheſis. One indeed St. *John* hath left us in very expreſs terms, *There was no Sea there*, He ſays. His words are theſe: *And I ſaw a New Heaven, and a New Earth: for the firſt Heaven and the firſt Earth were paſſed away*; *AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.* This character is very particular, and you ſee it exactly anſwers to our Hypotheſis: for in the new-form'd Earth, the Sea is cover'd and inconſpicuous: being an Abyſs, not a Sea; and wholly lodg'd in the Womb of the Earth. And this one Character, being inexplicable upon any other ſuppoſition, and very different

rent from the preſent Earth, makes it a ſtrong preſumption that we have hit upon the true model of the New Heavens and New Earth which S. *John* ſaw.

To this ſight of the New Heavens and New Earth, S. *John* immediately ſubjoyns the ſight of the *New Jeruſalem*, *ver.* 2. as being contemporary, and in ſome reſpects the ſame thing. 'Tis true, the Characters of the New *Jeruſalem* in theſe two laſt Chapters of the *Apocalypſe*, are very hard to be underſtood: ſome of them being incompetible to a *Terreſtrial* ſtate, and ſome of them to a *Celeſtial*; ſo as it ſeems to me very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the New *Jeruſalem* ſpoken of by S. *John*, is twofold: That which he ſaw himſelf, *ver.* 2. and that which the Angel ſhewed him afterwards, *ver.* 9. For I do not ſee what need there was of an *Angel*, and of *taking him up into a great and high mountain*, only to ſhew him that which he had ſeen before, at the foot of the Mountain. However we are to conſider in this place the Terreſtrial New *Jeruſalem* only, or that which is in the New Heavens and New Earth. And as S. *John* hath joyned theſe two together, ſo the Prophet *Iſaiah* had done the ſame thing before; when he had promiſed *new Heavens and a new Earth*, he calls them, under another name, *Jeruſalem*: and they both uſe the ſame character in effect, in the deſcription of their *Jeruſalem*. *Iſaiah* ſays, *And I will rejoyce in Jeruſalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.* S. *John* ſays alſo in his Jeruſalem, *God ſhall dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people: And he ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain.* Now in both theſe Prophets, when they treat upon this ſubject, we find they make frequent alluſions to Paradiſe and a Paradiſiacal ſtate; ſo as that may be juſtly taken as a Scripture-Character of the *New Heavens and the New Earth*. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſeems plainly to point at a Paradiſiacal ſtate, throughout that Chapter, by an univerſal innocency, and harmleſneſs of animals; and peace, plenty, health, longævity or immortality of the inhabitants. S. *John* alſo hath ſeveral alluſions to Para-

ch. 65. 17, 18.

ver. 19.

Apoc. 21. 3, 4.

ch. 21. & *ch.* 22. diſe, in thoſe two Chapters where he deſcribes the New Jeruſalem. And in his diſcourſe to the ſeven Churches, in one place (ch. 2. 7.) *To him that overcometh* is promiſed *to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.* And in another place (ch. 3. 12.) *to him that overcometh* is promiſed, *to have the name of the New Jeruſalem writ upon him.* Theſe I take to be the ſame thing, and the ſame reward of Chriſtian Victors, The *New Jeruſalem* or the New Heavens and New Earth, and the *Paradiſe of God.* Now this being the general Character of the New Earth, That it is *Paradiſiacal*: and the particular Character, That it *hath no Sea*: and both theſe agreeing with our Hypotheſis, as apparently deducible from thoſe principles and that manner of its formation which we have ſet down: We cannot but allow, that the Holy Scriptures and the Natural Theory agree in their Teſtimony, as to the conditions and properties of the *New Heavens and New Earth.*

From what hath been ſaid in this and the precedent Chapter, it will not be hard to interpret what S. *Paul* meant by his *Habitable Earth to come:* which is to be ſubjected to our Saviour and not to the Angels. In the ſecond chapter to the *Hebrews*, ver. 5. he ſays, *For unto the Angels hath he not put in ſubjection the WORLD TO COME:* So we read it, but, according to the ſtricteſt and plaineſt Tranſlation, it ſhould be *The habitable Earth to come.* Now what Earth is this, where our Saviour is abſolute Soveraign: and where the Government is neither Humane, nor Angelical, but peculiarly Theocratical? In the firſt place, this cannot be the preſent World or the preſent Earth, becauſe the Apoſtle calls it *Future*, or the *Earth to come.* Nor can it be underſtood of the days of the Goſpel: ſeeing the Apoſtle acknowledges, *ver.* 8. that this ſubjection, whereof he ſpeaks, is not yet made. And ſeeing Antichriſt will not finally be deſtroy'd till the appearance of our Saviour, (2 *Theſſ.* 2. 8.) nor Satan bound, while Antichriſt is in power: during the reign of theſe two, (who are the Rulers of the darkneſs of the World) our Saviour cannot properly be ſaid to begin his reign here. 'Tis true, He exerciſes his Providence over

Τὴν οἰκουμένην ἣ μέλλουσαν. πατὴρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος *Iſa.* 9. 6.

Epheſ. 6. 12.

over his Church, and ſecures it from being deſtroy'd: He can, by a power paramount, ſtop the rage either of Satan or Antichriſt; *Hitherto ſhall you go and no further.* As ſometimes when he was upon Earth, he exerted a Divine Power, which yet did not deſtroy his ſtate of Humiliation; ſo he interpoſes now when he thinks fit, but he does not finally take the power out of the hands of his Enemies, nor out of the hands of the Kings of the Earth. The *Kingdom is not deliver'd up to him,* and all *dominion, and power*; that *all Tongues and Nations ſhould ſerve him.* For S. *Paul* can mean no leſs in this place than that Kingdom in *Daniel:* Seeing he calls it *putting all things in ſubjection under his feet,* and ſays that it is not yet done. Upon this account alſo, as well as others, our Saviour might truly ſay to *Pilate* (*Joh.* 18. 36.) *my kingdom is not of this World.* And to his Diſciples, *The Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, Matt.* 20. 28. When he comes to receive his Kingdom, he comes in the clouds of Heaven (*Dan.* 7. 13, 14.) not in the womb of a Virgin. He comes with the equipage of a King and Conqueror; with thouſands and ten thouſands of Angels: not in the form of a Servant, or of a weak Infant; as he did at his firſt coming.

ch. 7. 13. 25, 26. *Hebr.* 2. 8.

Neither can this *World to come,* or this *Earth to come,* be underſtood of the Kingdom of Heaven. For the Greek word will not bear that ſence, nor is it ever us'd in Scripture for *Heaven,* Beſides, the Kingdom of Heaven, when ſpoken of as *future,* is not properly till the laſt reſurrection and final judgment. Whereas *This World to come,* which our Saviour is to govern, muſt be before that time, and will then expire. For all his Government, as to this World, expires at the day of Judgment, and *he will then deliver up the kingdom into the hands of his father: that he may be all in all.* Having reigned firſt himſelf, and *put down all rule and all authority and power.* So that S. *Paul,* in theſe two places of his Epiſtles, refers plainly to the ſame time and the ſame reign of Chriſt: which muſt be in a *future World,* and before the *day of Judgment*: and therefore according to our deductions, in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

1 *Cor.* 15. 24, *&c.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Inhabitants of the New Earth. That Natural Reason cannot determine this point. That according to Scripture; The Sons of the first Resurrection, or the Heirs of the Millennium, *are to be the Inhabitants of the New Earth. The Testimony of the Philosophers, and of the Christian Fathers, for the Renovation of the World. The first Proposition laid down.*

THUS we have setled the true notion, according to Reason and Scripture, of the *New Heavens* and *New Earth.* But where are the Inhabitants, you'l say? You have taken the pains to make us a New World, and now that it is made, it must stand empty. When the first World was destroyed, there were eight persons preserv'd, with a Set of living Creatures of every kind, as a Seminary or foundation of another World: But the Fire, it seems, is more mercileſs than the Water; for in this destruction of the World, it does not appear that there is one living Soul left, of any sort, upon the face of the Earth. No hopes of posterity, nor of any continuation of Mankind, in the usual way of propagation. And Fire is a barren Element, that breeds no living Creatures in it, nor hath any nourishment proper for their food or sustenance.

We are perfectly at a loss, therefore, so far as I see, for a new race of Mankind, or how to people this new-form'd World. The Inhabitants, if ever there be any, must either come from Heaven, or spring from the Earth: There are but these two ways. But *Natural Reason* can determine neither of these: sees no tract to follow in these unbeaten paths, nor can advance one step further. Farewel then, dear Friend, I must take another Guide: and leave you here, as *Moses* upon Mount *Pisgah*, only to look into that Land, which

which you cannot enter. I acknowledge the good ſervice you have done, and what a faithful Companion you have been, in a long journey; from the beginning of the World to this hour, in a tract of time of ſix thouſand years. We have travel'd together through the dark regions of a Firſt and Second *Chaos*: ſeen the World twice ſhipwrackt. Neither Water, nor Fire, could ſeparate us. But now you muſt give place to other Guides.

Welcome, *Holy Scriptures*, The Oracles of God, a Light ſhining in darkneſs, a Treaſury of hidden knowledge, and, where *humane faculties* cannot reach, a ſeaſonable help and ſupply to their defects. We are now come to the utmoſt bounds of their dominion: They have made us a New World, but, how it ſhall be inhabited, they cannot tell: know nothing of the Hiſtory or affairs of it. This we muſt learn from other Maſters, inſpir'd with the knowledge of things to come. And ſuch Maſters we know none, but the holy Prophets and Apoſtles. We muſt therefore now put our ſelves wholly under their conduct and inſtruction, and from them only receive our information concerning the moral ſtate of the future habitable Earth.

In the firſt place therefore, The Prophet *Iſaiah* tells us, as a preparation to our further enquiries, *The Lord God created the Heavens, God himſelf that formed the Earth, He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.* This is true, both of the preſent Earth and the *Future*, and of every habitable World whatſoever. For to what purpoſe is it made habitable, if not to be inhabited? That would be, as if a man ſhould manure, and plough, and every way prepare his ground for ſeed, but never ſow it. We do not build houſes that they ſhould ſtand empty, but look out for Tenants as faſt as we can; as ſoon as they are made ready, and become Tenantable. But if man could do things in vain and without uſe or deſign, yet God and Nature never do any thing *in vain*; much leſs ſo great a work as the making of a World. Which if it were in vain, would comprehend ten thouſand vanities or uſeleſs preparations in it. *We* may therefore in the firſt *Iſa.* 45. 18.

place,

place, ſafely conclude, *That the New Earth will be inhabited.*

But *by whom will it be inhabited?* This makes the ſecond enquiry. St. *Peter* anſwers this queſtion for us, and with a particular application to this very ſubject of the New Heavens and New Earth. They ſhall be inhabited, he ſays, by the *Juſt* or the *Righteous.* His words, which we cited before, are theſe. When he had deſcrib'd the Conflagration of the World, he adds, But we *expect new Heavens and a new Earth, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.* By *righteouſneſs* here, it is generally agreed muſt be underſtood Righteous Perſons. For Righteouſneſs cannot be without righteous Perſons: It cannot hang upon Trees, or grow out of the ground; 'Tis the endowment of reaſonable Creatures. And theſe righteous Perſons are eminently ſuch, and therefore call'd Righteouſneſs in the abſtract, or purely righteous without mixture of Vice.

So we have found Inhabitants for the New Earth: Perſons of an high and noble Character. Like thoſe deſcrib'd by St. *Peter*, (1 Epiſt. 2. 9.) *A choſen generation, a royal Prieſthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.* As if into that World, as into St. *John's New Jeruſalem*, nothing impure or unrighteous was to be admitted. Theſe being then the happy and holy Inhabitants: The next enquiry is, *Whence do they come?* From what off-ſpring, or from what Original? We noted before, that there was no remnant of Mankind left at the Conflagration, as there was at the Deluge: nor any hopes of a Reſtauration that way. Shall we then imagine that theſe new Inhabitants are a Colony wafted over from ſome neighbouring World: as from the Moon, or Mercury, or ſome of the higher Planets. You may imagine what you pleaſe, but that ſeems to me not imaginary onely but impracticable; And that the Inhabitants of thoſe Planets are Perſons of ſo great accompliſhments, is more than I know: but I am ſure they are not the Perſons here underſtood. For theſe muſt be ſuch as inhabited this Earth before. WE look for new Heavens and new Earth, ſays the Apoſtle: Surely to have ſome ſhare and intereſt

Apoc. 21. 27.

reſt in them; otherwiſe there would be no comfort in that expectation. And the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaid before, I create new Heavens and a new Earth, and the former ſhall come no more into remembrance: But be *YOU glad and rejoyce for ever in that which I create.* The truth is, none can have ſo good pretenſions to this ſpot of ground we call the Earth, as the Sons of Men, ſeeing they once poſſeſt it. And if it be reſtor'd again, 'tis their propriety and inheritance. But 'tis not Mankind in general that muſt poſſeſs this new World, but the *Iſrael of God*, according to the Prophet *Iſaiah*; or the *Juſt*, according to St. *Peter*. And eſpecially thoſe that have ſuffer'd for the ſake of their Religion. For this is that *Paliŋgeneſia*, as we noted before, that *Renovation*, or *Regeneration* of all things, where our Saviour ſays, Thoſe, that ſuffer loſs for his ſake, ſhall be recompenced: *Matt.* 19. 28, 29.

But they muſt then be raiſed from the Dead. For all Mankind was deſtroy'd at the Conflagration: and there is no reſource for them any other way, than by a Reſurrection. 'Tis true: and St. *John* gives us a fair occaſion to make this ſuppoſition, *That* there will be ſome raiſed from the Dead, before the General Day of Judgment. For he plainly diſtinguiſheth of a *Firſt* and *Second* Reſurrection, and makes the firſt to be a thouſand Years before the ſecond, and before the general Day of Judgment. Now, if there be truly and really a two-fold Reſurrection, as St. *John* tells us; and at a thouſand Years diſtance from one another: It may be very rationally preſum'd, that Thoſe that are raiſed in the firſt Reſurrection, are thoſe *Juſt* that will inhabit the *new Heavens and new Earth.* Or whom our Saviour promis'd to reward in the Renovation of the World. *Apoc.* 20.

For otherwiſe, who are thoſe *Juſt* that ſhall inhabit the *new Earth*, and whence do they come? Or when is that Reſtauration which our Saviour ſpeaks of, wherein thoſe that ſuffer'd for the ſake of the Goſpel ſhall be rewarded? St. *John* ſays, the *Martyrs*, at this firſt Reſurrection, ſhall live again and reign with Chriſt. Which ſeems to be the reward promis'd by our Saviour, to thoſe that ſuffer'd for his ſake: and the ſame

Perſons in both places. *And I ſaw the Souls of them,* ſays St. *John, that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the Word of God: and which had not worſhipped the Beaſt,*&c. *and They lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years.* Theſe, I ſay, ſeem to be the ſame Perſons to whom Chriſt had before promis'd and appropriated a particular reward. And this reward of theirs, or this Reign of theirs, is upon *Earth*: upon ſome Earth, new or old: not in Heaven. For, beſides that we read nothing of their Aſcenſion into Heaven after their Reſurrection: There are ſeveral marks that ſhew it muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of a ſtate upon Earth.

Apoc. 20. 4.

For *Gog* and *Magog* came from the *four quarters of the Earth*, and beſieged the *Camp of the Saints, and the beloved City.* That Camp and that City therefore were upon the Earth. And *fire came down from Heaven and devoured them.* If it came down from Heaven, it came upon the Earth. Furthermore, thoſe Perſons that are rais'd from the Dead, are ſaid to be *Prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and to reign with him a thouſand years.* Now theſe muſt be the ſame Perſons with the *Prieſts* and *Kings*, mention'd in the Fifth Chapter: which are there ſaid expreſly *to reign upon Earth*, or that they *ſhould reign upon Earth.* It remains therefore onely to determine, *What Earth* this is, where the *Sons of the firſt Reſurrection* will live and reign. It cannot be the preſent Earth, in the ſame ſtate, and under the ſame circumſtances it is now. For what happineſs or priviledge would that be, to be call'd back into a mortal life, under the neceſſities and inconveniences of ſickly Bodies, and an incommodious World? ſuch as the preſent ſtate of mortality is, and muſt continue to be, till ſome change be made in Nature. We may be ſure therefore, that a change will be made in Nature before that time, and that the ſtate they are rais'd into, and the Earth they are to inhabit, will be, at leaſt, *Paradiſiacal:* And conſequently can be no other than the *new Heavens* and *new Earth*, which we are to expect after the Conflagration.

Ver. 9.

Ver. 6.

Ver. 10.

From theſe Conſiderations, there is a great fairneſs to conclude, both as to the Characters of the Perſons, and of the place or ſtate, that *the Sons of the firſt Reſurrection,*

surrection will be Inhabitants of the *New Earth*, and reign there with Christ a thousand years. But seeing this is one of the principal and peculiar Conclusions of this Discourse, and bears a great part in this last Book of the Theory of the Earth, it will deserve a more full explication, and a more ample proof, to make it out. We must therefore take a greater compass in our discourse, and give a full account of that State which is usually call'd the *Millennium*: The Reign of the Saints a thousand years, or the Kingdom of Christ upon Earth. But before we enter upon this new Subject, give me leave to close our present Argument, about the *Renovation of the World*, with some Testimonies of the Ancient Philosophers, to that purpose. 'Tis plain to me, that there were amongst the Ancients several Traditions, or traditionary conclusions, which they did not raise themselves, by reason and observation, but receiv'd them from an unknown Antiquity. An instance of this is the *Conflagration of the World*: A Doctrine, as ancient, for any thing I know, as the World it self. At least as ancient as we have any Records. And yet none of those Ancients that tell us of it, give any argument to prove it. Neither is it any wonder, for they did not invent it themselves, but receiv'd it from others without proof, by the sole authority of Tradition. In like manner the *Renovation of the World*, which we are now speaking of, is an ancient Doctrine: both amongst the *Greeks* and *Eastern* Philosophers: But they shew us no method *how* the World may be *renew'd*, nor make any proof of its future Renovation; For it was not a discovery which they first made, but receiv'd it, with an implicite faith, from their Masters and Ancestors. And these Traditionary Doctrines were all fore-runners of that Light that was to shine more clearly at the opening of the Christian dispensation; to give a more full account of the fate and revolutions of the Natural World, as well as of the Moral.

The *Jews*, 'tis well known, held the *Renovation* of the World, and a *Sabbath* after six thousand years: according to the Prophecy that was currant amongst

them, whereof we have given a larger account in the precedent Book, ch. 5. And that future ſtate they call'd עולם הבא ἡ οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα. *Olam Hava*, or the *World to come*, which is the very ſame with S. *Paul's Habitable Earth to come*, *Heb.* 2. 6. Neither can I eaſily believe, that thoſe conſtitutions of *Moſes* that proceed ſo much upon a *Septenary*, or the number Seven, and have no ground or reaſon, in the nature of the thing, for that particular number: I cannot eaſily believe, I ſay, that they are either accidental or humourſome: without deſign or ſignification. But that they are typical, or repreſentative of ſome *Septenary* ſtate, that does eminently deſerve and bear that Character. *Moſes*, in the Hiſtory of the Creation, makes ſix days work, and then a Sabbath. Then, after ſix years, he makes a *Sabbath-year*: and after a Sabbath of years a year of Jubilee, *Levit.* 25. All theſe leſſer revolutions ſeem to me to point at the grand Revolution, the great *Sabbath* or *Jubilee*, after ſix Millenaries, which as it anſwers the type in point of time, ſo likewiſe in the nature and contents of it: Being a ſtate of Reſt from all labour and trouble and ſervitude: a ſtate of joy and triumph: and a ſtate of *Renovation*, when things are to return to their firſt condition and priſtine order. So much for the *Jews*.

The Heathen Philoſophers, both *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, had the ſame doctrine of the *Renovation* of the *World*, currant amongſt them. And that under ſeveral names and phraſes; as of the *Great Year*, the *Reſtauration*, the *Mundane periods*, and ſuch like. They ſuppos'd ſtated and fix'd periods of time, upon expiration whereof there would always follow ſome great revolution of the World, and the face of Nature would be renew'd. Particularly after the Conflagration, the *Stoicks* always ſuppos'd a new World to ſucceed, or another frame of Nature to be erected in the room of that which was deſtroy'd. And they uſe the ſame words and phraſes upon this occaſion that Scripture uſeth; *Chryſippus* calls it *Apocataſtaſis*, as S. *Peter* does, *Act.* 3. 21. *Marcus Antoninus* in his *Meditations* ſeveral times calls it *Palingeneſia*, as our Saviour does, *Matt.* 19. 28. And *Numenius* hath two

Lact. l. 7. *c.* 23.

Euſeb. præp. Ev. l. 7. *c.* 23.

Scri-

Scripture-words, *Reſurrection* and *Reſtitution*, to expreſs this renovation of the World. Then as to the *Platonicks*, that Revolution of all things hath commonly been call'd the *Platonick* year, as if *Plato* had been the firſt author of that opinion; But that's a great miſtake; he receiv'd it from the *Barbarick* Philoſophers, and particularly from the *Ægyptian* Prieſts, amongſt whom he liv'd ſeveral years, to be inſtructed in their learning. But I do not take *Plato* neither to be the firſt that brought this doctrine into *Greece*: for, beſides that the Sibylls, whoſe antiquity we do not well know, ſung this Song of old, as we ſee it copyed from them by *Virgil* in his fourth Eclogue: *Pythagoras* taught it before *Plato*: and *Orpheus* before them both. And that's as high as the Greek Philoſophy reaches.

The Barbarick Philoſophers were more ancient: namely the *Ægyptians*, *Perſians*, *Chaldeans*, *Indian Brackmans*, and other Eaſtern Nations. Their Monuments indeed are in a great meaſure loſt, yet from the remains of them which the *Greeks* have tranſcrib'd, and ſo preſerv'd, in their writings, we ſee plainly they all had this doctrine of the *Future Renovation*. And to this day the poſterity of the *Brackmans* in the Eaſt Indies, retain the ſame notion, *That* the World will be renewed after the laſt Fire. You may ſee the citations, if you pleaſe, for all theſe Nations, in the *Latin* Treatiſe, ch. 5. Which I thought would be too dry and tedious to be render'd into Engliſh.

To theſe Teſtimonies of the Philoſophers of all Ages, for the Future Renovation of the World, we might add the Teſtimonies of the Chriſtian Fathers: Greek and Latin, ancient and modern. I will only give you a bare Liſt of them, and refer you to the Latin Treatiſe for the words or the places. Amongſt the Greek Fathers, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, The Fathers of the *Council of Nice*, *Euſebius*, *Baſil*; The two *Cyrills*, of *Jeruſalem* and *Alexandria*; The two *Gregorys*, *Nazianzen* and *Nyſſen*; S. *Chryſoſtom*, *Zacharias Mitylenenſis*; and of later date, *Damaſcen*, *Oecumenius*, *Euthymius*, and others. Theſe have all ſet their hands and Seals to this doctrine. Of the Latin Fathers, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, S. *Hilary*, S. *Ambroſe*, S. *Auſtin*, S. *Je-* *chap. 9.*

S. *Jerome*; and many later Eccleſiaſtical Authors. Theſe, with the Philoſophers before mentioned, I count good authority, Sacred and prophane: which I place here as an out-guard upon Scripture, where our principal force lies. And theſe three united and acting in conjunction, will be ſufficient to ſecure this firſt poſt, and to prove our firſt Propoſition, which is this: *That after the Conflagration of this World, there will be New Heavens and a New Earth: and that Earth will be inhabited.*

Propoſ. I.

CHAP. IV.

The proof of a Millennium, *or of a bleſſed Age to come, from Scripture. A view of the Apocalypſe, and of the Prophecies of* Daniel, *in reference to this Kingdom of Chriſt and of his Saints.*

WE have given fair preſumptions, if not proofs, in the precedent Chapter, That the Sons of the firſt Reſurrection will be the perſons that ſhall inhabit the *New Earth*, or the World to come. But to make that proof compleat and unexceptionable, I told you it would be neceſſary to take a larger compaſs in our diſcourſe, and to examine what is meant by *That Reign with Chriſt a thouſand years*, which is promis'd to the Sons of the *firſt Reſurrection*; by St. *John* in the Apocalypſe; and in other places of Scripture is uſually call'd the *Kingdom of Chriſt*, and the reign of the Saints. And by Eccleſiaſtical Authors, in imitation of S. *John*, it is commonly ſtyled the *Millennium*. We ſhall indifferently uſe any of theſe words or phraſes; and examine, Firſt, the truth of the Notion and Opinion; whether in Scripture there be ſuch an happy ſtate promiſed to the Saints, under the conduct of Chriſt. And then we will proceed to examine

examine the nature, characters, place and time of it. And I am in hopes when these things are duly discuss'd and stated, you will be satisfied that we have found out the true Inhabitants of the New Heavens and New Earth: and the true mystery of that state which is call'd the *Millennium*, or the Reign of Christ and of his Saints.

We begin with S. *John*; whose words, in the twentieth chapter of the *Apocalypse*, are express, both as to the first Resurrection, and as to the reign of those Saints, that rise, with Christ, for a thousand years. Satan in the mean time being bound, or disabled from doing mischief and seducing mankind, The words of the Prophet are these: *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan; and bound him a thousand years. And I saw Thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the Souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their fore-heads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first Resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first Resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* These words do fully express a Resurrection, and a reign with Christ a thousand years. As for that particular space of time, of a *thousand years*, it is not much material to our present purpose: but the Resurrection here spoken of, and the reign with Christ, make the substance of the controversie, and in effect prove all that we enquire after at present. This Resurrection, you see, is call'd the *First Resurrection*, by way of distinction from the second and general Resurrection; which is also taken notice of, and plac'd a thousand years after the first. And both this first Resurrection and the reign of Christ, seem to be appropriated to the

ver. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.

Mar-

Martyrs in this place. For the Prophet ſays, *The Souls of thoſe that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus*, &c. *They lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years.* From which words, if you pleaſe, we will raiſe this Doctrine: That, *Thoſe that have ſuffered for the ſake of Chriſt and a good Conſcience, ſhall be raiſed from the dead a thouſand years before the general Reſurrection, and reign with Chriſt, in an happy ſtate.* This Propoſition ſeeems to be plainly included in the words of S. *John*, and to be the intended ſence of this Viſion; but you muſt have patience a little as to your enquiry into particulars, till, in the progreſs of our diſcourſe, we have brought all the parts of this concluſion into a fuller light.

In the mean time, there is but one way, that I know of, to evade the force of theſe words, and of the concluſion drawn from them; and that is, by ſuppoſing that the *Firſt Reſurrection* here mentioned, is not to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe, but is Allegorical and myſtical; ſignifying only a Reſurrection from ſin to a Spiritual Life. As we are ſaid to be *dead in ſin*, and to be *riſen with Chriſt*, by Faith and Regeneration. This is a manner of Speech which S. *Paul* does ſometimes uſe: as *Epheſ.* 2. 6. and 5. 14. and *Col.* 3. 1. But how can this be applyed to the preſent caſe? Were the Martyrs dead in ſin? 'Tis they that are here rais'd from the dead. Or, after they were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, naturally dead and laid in their graves, were they then regenerate by Faith? There is no congruity in allegories ſo applyed. Beſides, why ſhould they be ſaid to be regenerate a thouſand years before the day of Judgment: Or, to reign with Chriſt, after this Spiritual Reſurrection, ſuch a limited time, a thouſand years? why not to Eternity? For in this allegorical ſence of *riſing* and *reigning*, they will reign with him for everlaſting. Then, after a thouſand years muſt all the wicked be regenerate, and riſe into a Spiritual Life? 'Tis ſaid here, *The reſt of the Dead lived not again, until the thouſand years were finiſhed.* That implyes, that at the end of theſe thouſand years, the reſt of the dead did live again; which, according to the

ver. 5.

Allegory

Allegory must be, that, after a thousand years, all the wicked will be regenerate, and rais'd into a Spiritual Life. These absurdities arise upon an allegorical exposition of this Resurrection, if apply'd to single Persons.

But Dr. *Hammond*, a Learned and worthy Divine, (but one that loves to contract and cramp the sence of Prophecies) making this first Resurrection allegorical, applies it not to single Persons, but to the state of the Church in general; The Christian Church, he says, shall have a Resurrection for a thousand years: that is, shall rise out of Persecution, be in a prosperous condition, and an undisturb'd profession of the true Religion, for so long a time. But this agrees with the Prophecy as little as the former; If it be a state of the Church in general, and of the Church then in being, why is this Resurrection apply'd to the Martyrs? why are they said to rise? seeing the state they liv'd in, was a troublesome state of the Church, and it would be no happiness to have that reviv'd again. Then as to the Time of this Resurrection of the Church, where will you fix it? The Prophet *Daniel* places this Reign of Christ, at, or after the dissolution of the fourth Monarchy: and St. *John* places it a thousand years before the last Day of Judgment: How will you adjust the Allegorical Resurrection of the Church to these limits? Or if, in point of time, you was free, as to Prophecy; yet how would you adjust it to History? Where will you take these thousand years of happiness and prosperity to the Church? These Authors suppose them past, and therefore must begin them either from the first times of the Gospel, or from the time of *Constantine*. Under the first Ages of the Gospel, were, you know, the great Persecutions by the *Heathen* Emperours: Could those be call'd the Reign of Christ and of his Saints? Was Sathan then bound? or was this Epocha but a thousand years before the Day of Judgment? And if you begin this Resurrection of the Church from the days of *Constantine*, when the Empire became Christian, how will you reckon a thousand years from that time, for the continuance of the Church in *peace* and *purity*? for

the reign of Christ and of his Saints must necessarily imply both those Characters. Besides, who are the *rest of the Dead*, that liv'd after the expiration of those thousand years, if they begun at *Constantine?* And why is not the second Resurrection and the Day of Judgment yet come? Lastly, you ought to be tender of interpreting the first Resurrection in an Allegorical sence, lest you expose the second Resurrection to be made an Allegory also.

Ver. 5.

To conclude, the words of the Text are plain and express for a literal Resurrection, as to the first, as well as the second; and there is no Allegorical interpretation that I know of, that will hold through all the particulars of the Text, consistently with it self and with History. And when we shall have prov'd this future Kingdom of Christ from other places of the Apocalypse, and of Holy Writ, you will the more easily admit the literal sence of this place: Which, you know, according to the receiv'd rule of Interpreters, is never to be quitted or forsaken, without necessity. But when I speak of confirming this Doctrine from other passages of Scripture, I do not mean as to that definite time of a *thousand years*, for that is no where else mention'd in the Apocalypse or in Scripture, that I know of; and seems to be mention'd here, in this close of all things, to mind us of that type that was propos'd in the beginning of all things, *Of Six days and a Sabbath.* Whereof each Day comprehends a thousand years, and the *Sabbath*, which is the *Millennial state*, hath its thousand. According to the known Prophecy of *Elias*, which, as I told you before, was not onely receiv'd amongst the *Jews*, but also own'd by very many of the Christian Fathers.

Book 3. *ch.* 5.

To proceed therefore to other parts of St. *John*'s Prophecies, that set forth this Kingdom of Christ. The Vision of the *Seven Trumpets* is one of the most remarkable in the Apocalypse; and the seventh Trumpet, which, plainly reaches to the end of the World, and the Resurrection of the Dead, opens the Scene to the *Millennium.* Hear the sound of it. *The seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms*

Chap. 11. 15, 16, 17, 18.

of

of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty Elders, which sat before God on their Seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God: Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the Nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the Dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy Name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the Earth, &c. This is manifestly the kingdom of Christ: and with this is joyn'd the Resurrection of the Dead, and the rewarding of the suffering Prophets and Saints; as in the *twentieth Chapter.* This is that *mystery of God that was to be finish'd in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel*: as is said in the 20*th.* Chap. ver. 7. *As he hath declared to his servants the Prophets.* Namely, the mystery of this kingdom, which was foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament: and more especially by *Daniel*, as we shall see hereafter.

The *new Jerusalem*, (as it is set down, *Apoc.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.) is another instance or image of this kingdom of Christ. And the *Palm-bearing Company*, Chap. 7, 9, &c. are some of the Martyrs that shall enjoy it. They are plainly describ'd there as Christian Martyrs; (*ver.* 14.) And their reward, or the state of happiness they are to enjoy, (*ver.* 15, 16, 17.) is the same with that of the Inhabitants of the *new Jerusalem*: Ch. 21. 2, 3, 4, &c. as, upon comparing those two places, will easily appear. Furthermore, at the opening of the *Seals*, *Chap.* 5. which is another principal Vision, and reaches to the end of the World, there is a prospect given us of this kingdom of Christ, and of that reward of his Saints. For when they sing the new Song to the Lamb, (*ver.* 9, 10.) they say, *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: For thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, by thy bloud. And hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests: and we shall reign on the Earth.* This must be the same state, and the same thousand-years-Reign mention'd in the 20*th.* Chapter. Where 'tis said, (*ver.* 6.) the partakers of it

ſhall be Prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

Another completory Viſion, that extends it ſelf to the end of the World, is that of the *ſeven Vials*, *Ch.* 15, & 16. And as at the opening of the Seals, ſo at the pouring out of the Vials, a triumphal Song is ſung, and 'tis call'd the *Song of Moſes and of the Lamb.* 'Tis plainly a Song of thankſgiving for a Deliverance: but I do not look upon this deliverance as already wrought, before the pouring out of Vials, though it be plac'd before them: as often the grand deſign and iſſue of a Viſion is plac'd at the beginning. It is wrought by the Vials themſelves, and by their effuſion, and therefore upon the pouring out of the laſt Vial, The voice came out of the Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, ſaying, *Conſummatum eſt*: *It is done.* Now the Deliverance is wrought, now the work is at an end: or, *The myſtery of God is finiſh'd*, as the phraſe was before, concerning the *7th.* Trumpet: *Ch.* 10. 7. You ſee therefore this terminates upon the ſame time, and conſequently upon the ſame ſtate, of the *Millennium.* And that they are the ſame Perſons that triumph here, and reign there, *Ch.* 20. You may ſee by the ſame Characters given to both of them. Here, thoſe that triumph, are ſaid *to have gotten the victory* over the Beaſt, and over his Image, *and over his mark, and over the number of his name.* And there, Thoſe that reign with Chriſt, are ſaid to be thoſe *that had not worſhipped the Beaſt, neither his Image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.* Theſe are the ſame Perſons therefore, triumphing over the ſame Enemies, and enjoying the ſame reward.

ch. 15. 3.

ch. 16. 17.

ch. 15. 2.

ch. 20. 4.

And you ſhall ſeldom find any *Doxology* or *Hallelujah* in the Apocalypſe, but 'tis in proſpect of the kingdom of Chriſt, and the *Millennial* ſtate. That is ſtill the burthen of the Sacred Song: The complement of every grand Viſion, and the life and ſtrength of the whole Syſteme of Prophecies in that Book. Even thoſe *Halleluja's* that are ſung at the deſtruction of *Babylon*, in the *19th.* Chapter, are rais'd upon the view of the ſucceeding ſtate, *the Reign of Chriſt.* For the Text ſays, *And I heard as it were a voice of a great multitude, and*

ch. 19. 6, 7.

as

as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah. FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. Let us be glad and rejoyce and give honour to him: FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HER SELF READY. This appears plainly to be the *New Jerusalem*, if you consult the 21. ch. ver. 2. *And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND.* 'Tis, no doubt, the same Bride and Bridegroom, in both places; the same marriage or preparations for marriage; which are compleated in the Millennial blisse, in the kingdom of Christ and of his Saints.

I must still beg your patience a little longer, in pursuing this argument throughout the Apocalypse. As towards the latter end of S. *John*'s Revelation this Kingdom of Christ shines out in a more full glory, so there are the dawnings of it in the very beginning and entrance into his Prophecies. As at the beginning of a Poem, we have commonly in a few words the design of the Work, in like manner S. *John* makes this Preface to his Prophecies, *From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own bloud: And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. Behold, he cometh in the clouds*, &c. In this Prologue the grand argument is pointed at, and that happy Catastrophe and last Scene which is to crown the Work: The Reign of Christ and of his Saints at his second coming. He hath *made us Kings and Priests unto God*: This is always the Characteristick of those that are to enjoy the Millennial happiness; as you may see at the opening of the Seals, *chap.* 5. 10. and in the Sons of the *First Resurrection*, *ch.* 20. 6. And this being joyned to the coming of our Saviour, puts it still more out of doubt. That expression also, of being *washt from our sins in his bloud*, is repeated again both at the opening of the Seals, *ch.* 5. 9. and in the *Palm-bearing* Company, *ch.* 7. 14. both which places *ch.* 1. 5, 6.

we

we have cited before as referring to the Millennial State.

Give me leave to add further, that as in this general Preface, ſo alſo in the Introductory viſions of the *Seven Churches*, there are, covertly or expreſly, in the concluſion of each, glances upon the *Millennium*. As
ch. 2. 7. in the firſt to *Epheſus*, the Prophet concludes, *He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit ſays to the Churches: TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.* This is the Millennial happineſs which is promiſed to the Conquerour; as we noted before concerning that phraſe. In like manner in the ſecond to *Smyr-*
ch. 2. 11. *na*, He concludes: *He that overcometh, ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death.* This implyes, he ſhall be partaker of the *firſt Reſurrection*, for that's the thing underſtood; as you may ſee plainly by their being joyn'd in the 20*th ch. ver.* 6. *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt Reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power: but they ſhall be Prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and*
ch. 2. 17. *ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.* In the 3*d* to *Pergamus*, the promiſe is, *to eat of the hidden Manna, to have a white ſtone, and a new name written in it.* But ſeeing the Prophet adds, *which no man knoweth ſaving he that receiveth it*, we will not preſume to interpret
ch. 2.26,27. that new ſtate, whatſoever it is. In *Thyatira*, the reward is, *To have power over the nations*, and to have the *Morning Star*. Which is to reign with Chriſt, who is the morning Star, in his Millennial Empire: both theſe phraſes being us'd in that ſence in the cloſe of
ch. 3. 5. this Book. In *Sardis* the promiſe is, *To be clothed in white raiment, and not to be blotted out of the Book of*
ch. 7.9,14. *Life.* And you ſee afterwards the *Palm-bearing* Company are clothed in *white robes*; and thoſe that are admitted into the *New Jeruſalem*, are ſuch as are *written*
ch. 3. 12. *in the Lamb's book of life*, *ch.* 21. 27. Then as to *Philadelphia*, the reward promiſed there does openly mark the Millennial ſtate, by the *City of God, New Jeruſalem which cometh down out of heaven from God:* com-
ch. 3. 21. par'd with *chap.* 21. 2. Laſtly, to the Church of *Laodicea* is ſaid, *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit*

with

with me in my Throne. And that is the usual phrase to express the dignity of those that reign with Christ, in his Millennial kingdom: as you may see, *Apoc.* 20. 4. *Matt.* 19. 28. *Dan.* 7. 9, 13, 14. So all these promises to the Churches aim at one and the same thing, and terminate upon the same point; 'Tis the same reward express'd in different ways; and seeing 'tis still fixt upon a victory, and appropriated to those that overcome, it does the more easily carry our thoughts to the *Millennium*, which is the proper reward of Victors, that is, of Martyrs and Confessors.

Thus you see how this notion and mystery of the Millennial kingdom of Christ, does both begin and end the *Apocalypse*, and run thorough all its parts: As the Soul of that Body of Prophecies: A Spirit or ferment that actuates the whole mass. And if we could thoroughly understand that illustrious Scene at the opening of this Apocalyptical Theatre in the 4*th* and 5*th chap.* I do not doubt but we should find it a Representation of the Majesty of our Saviour in the Glory of his future Kingdom. But I dare not venture upon the explication of it, there are so many things of difficult and dubious interpretation, coucht under those Schemes. Wherefore having made these observations upon the Prophecies of S. *John*, we will now add to them some reflections upon the Prophecies of *Daniel.* That by the agreement and concurrence of these two great Witnesses, the Conclusion we pretend to prove, may be fully established.

In the Prophecies of *Daniel* there are two grand Visions, that of the *Statue* or Image, *chap.* 2. and that of the four Beasts, *chap.* 7. And both these Visions terminate upon the *Millennium*, or the Kingdom of Christ. In the Vision of the Statue, representing to us the four great Monarchies of the World successively, (whereof, by the general consent of Interpreters, The *Roman* is the fourth and last) after the dissolution of the last of them, a fifth Monarchy, the Kingdom of Christ, is openly introduc'd, in these words: *And in the days of these kingdoms, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroy'd, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it* ch. 2. v. 44.

shall

ſhall break in pieces, and conſume all thoſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand for ever. This may be verified, in ſome meaſure, by the firſt coming of our Saviour in the days of the 4*th* kingdom; when his Religion from ſmall beginnings, in a ſhort time overſpread the greateſt part of the known World. As the *ſtone cut out without hands*, became a great *mountain and filled the whole Earth.* But the full and final accompliſhment of this Prophecy cannot be till the ſecond coming of our Saviour. For not till then, will he *break in pieces and conſume all thoſe kingdoms; and that in ſuch a manner, that they ſhall become like the chaff of the Summer threſhing-floor, carried away by the wind: ſo as no place ſhall be found for them.* This, I ſay, will not be done, nor an everlaſting Kingdom erected in their place, over all the Nations of the Earth, till his Second Coming, and his Millennial Reign.

ver. 34,35.

ver. 35.

But this Reign is declared more expreſly, in the Viſion of the four Beaſts, *chap.* 7. For after the deſtruction of the fourth Beaſt, the Prophet ſays, *I ſaw in the night, Viſions, and behold one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him: And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: His dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away: and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroy'd.* Accordingly he ſays, ver. 21, 22. *The laſt Beaſt and the little Horn made war againſt the Saints, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the Saints of the moſt High; and the time came that the Saints poſſeſſed the kingdom.* And laſtly, in purſuit ſtill of the ſame argument, he concludes to the ſame effect in fuller words, ver. 26, 27. *But the Judgment ſhall ſit, and they ſhall take away his dominion, to conſume and to deſtroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the Saints of the moſt High: whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and all dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him.*

ch. 7. 13.

Here is the end of the matter: ſays the Prophet. Here is the upſhot and reſult of all. Here terminate both

ch. 7. 28.
ch. 12. 13.

the

the Prophecies of *Daniel* and St. *John:* and all the affairs of the Terreſtrial World. *Daniel* brings in, this kingdom of Chriſt, in the concluſion of two or three Viſions; but St. *John* hath interwoven it every where with his Prophecies, from firſt to laſt. And you may as well open a Lock without a Key, as interpret the Apocalypſe without the *Millennium.* But after theſe two great Witneſſes, the one for the old Teſtament, the other for the new, we muſt look into the reſt of the Sacred Writers; for tho' every ſingle Author there, is an Oracle, yet the concurrence of Oracles is ſtill a further demonſtration, and takes away all remains of doubt or incredulity.

CHAP. V.

A view of other places of Scripture concerning the Millennium or future kingdom of Chriſt. In what ſence all the Prophets have born Teſtimony concerning it.

THE Wife of *Zebedee* came to our Saviour, and begg'd of him, like a fond Mother, that her two Sons might ſit, one at his right hand, th'other at his left, when he came into his kingdom. Our Saviour does not deny the ſuppoſition, or general ground of her requeſt, that *he was to have a kingdom*; but tells her, The honours of that kingdom were not then in his diſpoſal. He had not drunk his Cup, nor been baptiz'd with his laſt baptiſm: which were conditions, both to him and others, of entring into that kingdom. Yet, in another place, our Saviour is ſo well aſſur'd of his intereſt and authority there, by the good will of his Father, that he promiſes to his Diſciples and followers, that for the loſſes they ſhould ſuſtain here, upon his account, and for the ſake of his Goſpel, they ſhould receive there an hundred fold; and ſit upon *Matt.* 20, 21. *Matt.* 19. 28.

Thrones with him, judging the Tribes of *Iſrael.* The words are theſe: *And Jeſus ſaid unto them, verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me,* in the Regeneration or Renovation, *when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.* Theſe Thrones, in all reaſon, muſt be underſtood to be the ſame with thoſe which we mention'd in the foregoing Chapter, out of *Daniel* and the *Apocalypſe*: and therefore mark the ſame time and the ſame ſtate. And ſeeing, in thoſe places, they plainly ſignified the *Millennial* ſtate, or the kingdom of Chriſt and of his Saints, they muſt here ſignifie the ſame, in this promiſe of our Saviour to his ſuffering Followers. And as to the word *Palingeneſia*, which is here tranſlated *Regeneration*, 'tis very well known, that, both the *Greek* Philoſophers, and *Greek* Fathers, uſe that very word for the *Renovation of the World.* Which is to be, as we ſhall hereafter make appear, at or before the *Millennial* ſtate.

Dan. 7. 9. *Apoc.* 20. 4.

Our Saviour alſo, in his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, makes this one of his *Beatitudes, Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth.* But *how*, I pray, or *where*, or *when*, do the Meek inherit the Earth? neither at preſent, I am ſure, nor in any paſt Ages. 'Tis the Great Ones of the World, ambitious Princes and Tyrants, that ſlice the Earth amongſt them: and thoſe that can flatter them beſt, or ſerve them in their intereſts or pleaſures, have the next beſt ſhares. But a meek, modeſt, and humble Spirit, is the moſt unqualified Perſon that can be for a Court, or a Camp: to ſcramble for Preferment, or Plunder. Both He, and his ſelf-denying notions, are ridicul'd, as things of no uſe, and proceeding from meanneſs and poorneſs of Spirit. *David*, who was a Perſon of an admirable devotion, but of an unequal Spirit; ſubject to great dejections, as well as elevations of mind; was ſo much affected with the proſperity of the wicked in this World, that he could ſcarce forbear charging Providence with injuſtice. You may ſee ſeveral touches of a repining Spirit in his Pſalms: and in the Seventy-third *Pſalm*, compos'd upon that Subject, you have both the wound and the cure. Now this Beatitude

pronounc'd

pronounc'd here by our Saviour, was ſpoken before by *David*, *Pſal.* 37. 11. The ſame *David* that was always ſo ſenſible of the hard uſage of the Juſt in this life. Our Saviour alſo, and his Apoſtles, preach the Doctrine of the Croſs every where, and foretell the ſufferings that ſhall attend the Righteous, in this World. Therefore neither *David*, nor our Saviour, could underſtand this *inheritance of the Earth*, otherwiſe than of ſome future ſtate, or of a ſtate yet to come. But as it muſt be a future ſtate, ſo it muſt be a Terreſtrial ſtate; for it could not be call'd the *inheritance of the Earth*, if it was not ſo. And 'tis to be a ſtate of *peace*, as well as *plenty*, according to the words of the *Pſalmiſt*, *But the meek ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of peace.* It follows therefore from theſe premiſſes, that, both our Saviour, and *David*, muſt underſtand ſome future ſtate of the Earth, wherein the *Meek* will enjoy both peace and plenty. And this will appear to be the future kingdom of Chriſt, when, upon a fuller deſcription, we ſhall have given you the marks and characters of it.

In the mean time, why ſhould we not ſuppoſe, this Earth, which the Meek are to inherit, to be that *habitable Earth to come*, which St. *Paul* mentions (*Hebr.* 2. 6.) and repreſents as ſubject to our Saviour in a peculiar manner: at his diſpoſal and under his government, as his kingdom; Why ſhould not that Earth be the ſubject of this Beatitude: The promis'd Land, the Lot of the Righteous? This I am ſure of, that both this Text and the former deſerve our ſerious thoughts; and tho' they do not expreſly, and in terms, prove the future kingdom of our Saviour, yet upon the faireſt interpretations they imply ſuch a ſtate. And it will be very uneaſie to give a ſatisfactory account, either of the *Regeneration* or *Renovation*, when our Saviour and his Diſciples ſhall ſit upon Thrones: Or of that *Earth* which the *Meek ſhall inherit:* Or laſtly, of that *Habitable World*, which is peculiarly ſubject to the dominion of Jeſus Chriſt, without ſuppoſing, on this ſide Heaven, ſome other reign of Chriſt and his Saints, than what we ſee, or what they enjoy, at preſent.

But to proceed in this argument. It will be neceſſary, as I told you, to ſet down ſome notes and characters of this Reign of Chriſt and of his Saints, whereby it may be diſtinguiſh'd from the preſent ſtate, and preſent kingdoms of the World. And theſe characters are chiefly three, *Juſtice*, *Peace*, and *Divine Preſence* or conduct, which uſes to be called *Theocraſie*. By theſe characters it is ſufficiently diſtinguiſh'd from the kingdoms of this World; which are generally unjuſt in their titles or exerciſe: ſtain'd with bloud: and ſo far from being under a particular divine conduct, that humane paſſions and humane vices, are the Springs that commonly give motion to their greateſt deſigns. But more particularly and reſtrainedly, the Government of Chriſt, is oppoſed to the kingdom and government of Antichriſt, whoſe characters are diametrically oppoſite to theſe, being *injuſtice*, *cruelty*, and *humane or diabolical artifices*.

Upon this ſhort view of the kingdom of Chriſt, let us make enquiry after it amongſt the Prophets of the Old Teſtament. And we ſhall find, upon examination, that there is ſcarce any of them, greater or leſſer, but take notice of this myſtical kingdom; either expreſly, or under the types of *Iſrael*, *Sion*, *Jeruſalem*, and ſuch like. And therefore I am apt to think, that, when S. *Peter* in his Sermon to the *Jews*, *Act.* 3. ſays, All the holy Prophets ſpoke of *The Reſtitution of all things*, he does not mean the Renovation of the World ſeparately from the kingdom of Chriſt, but complexly, as it may imply both. For there are not many of the old Prophets that have ſpoken of the Renovation of the *Natural* World; but a great many have ſpoken of the Renovation of the *Moral*, in the kingdom of Chriſt. Theſe are S. *Peter*'s words: *Act.* 3. 19, 20, 21. *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord. And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens muſt receive until the times of* RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS. The Apoſtle here mentions three things, The *Times of refreſhing*, The *Second Coming* of our Saviour, And the *Times* of *Reſtitution*

ſtitution of all things. And to the laſt of theſe he immediately ſubjoins, *which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets, ſince the world began.* This *Reſtitution of all things*, I ſay, muſt not be underſtood abſtractly from the reign of Chriſt, but as in conjunction with it; and in that ſence, and no other, it is the general ſubject of the Prophets.

To enter therefore into the Schools of the Prophets, and enquire their ſence concerning this myſtery, let us firſt addreſs our ſelves to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and the Royal Prophet *David*; who ſeem to have had many noble thoughts, or inſpirations, upon this ſubject. *Iſaiah* in the *65th chap.* from the *17th ver.* to the end, treats upon this argument: and joyns together the Renovation of the Natural and Moral World; as S. *Peter*, in the place forementioned, ſeems to do. And accordingly the Prophet, having ſet down ſeveral narural characters of that State, as indolency and joy, longevity, eaſe, and plenty, from *ver.* 18. to the *24th.* He there begins the moral characters, of divine favour, and ſuch a particular protection, that they are heard and anſwer'd before they pray. And laſtly, He repreſents it as a ſtate of univerſal peace and innocency, *ver.* 23. *The Wolf and the Lamb ſhall feed together*, &c.

This laſt character, which comprehends *Peace*, *Juſtice*, and *Innocency*, is more fully diſplay'd by the ſame Prophet, in the *11th chap.* where he treats alſo of the Kingdom of Chriſt. Give me leave to ſet down his words, *ver.* 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *But with righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the Earth: and he ſhall ſmite the Earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips ſhall he ſlay the wicked. And righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins. The Wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lye down with the kid: and the Calf and the young Lyon, and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them. And the Cow and the Bear ſhall feed, their young ones ſhall lie down together: and the Lyon ſhall eat ſtraw like the Ox. And the ſuckling child ſhall play on the hole of the Aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the Cocka-*

Cockatrice-den. They ſhall not hurt, nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: for the Earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea. Thus far the Prophet: Now if we joyn this to what we noted before, from his 65*th* chap. concerning the ſame ſtate, 'twill be impoſſible to underſtand it of any order of things, that is now, or hath been hitherto in the World. And conſequently it muſt be the Idea of ſome ſtate to come, and particularly of that which we call the Future Kingdom of Chriſt.

The ſame pacifick temper, Innocency and Juſtice, are celebrated by this Prophet when the *Mountain of the Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains*, chap. 2. 2, 4. *And he ſhall judge amongſt the nations, and ſhall rebuke many people; and they ſhall beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.* And as to righteouſneſs, he ſays in the 23. chap. *Behold a king ſhall reign in righteouſneſs, and Princes ſhall rule in judgment*, &c. Theſe places, I know, uſually are applyed to the firſt coming of our Saviour; the peaceableneſs of his doctrine, and the propagation of it through all the World. I willingly allow this to be a true ſence, ſo far as it will go. But 'tis one thing to be a true ſence, to ſuch a degree; and another thing to be the final ſence and accompliſhment of a Prophecy. The affairs of the firſt and ſecond coming of our Saviour are often mingled together in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament; but in that mixture there are ſome characters whereby you may diſtinguiſh what belongs to his firſt, and what to his ſecond coming: what to the time when he came to ſuffer, and what to the time when he ſhall come to reign. For inſtance, In theſe Prophecies recited, though there are many things very applicable to his firſt coming, yet that *Regality* which is often ſpoken of, and that univerſal Peace and Innocency that will accompany it, cannot be verified of his coming in the fleſh. Seeing it is plain, that in his ſtate of humiliation he did not come as a King, to rule over the nations of the Earth. And he ſays himſelf expreſly, *That his Kingdom is not of this World.*

World. Joh. 18.36. And the Prayer of *Salome*, and of the good Thief upon the Croſs, ſuppoſe it not then preſent, but to come. Then as to the eſtabliſhment of *Peace* in his kingdom, it does not at all appear to me that there is more peace in the World now than there was before our Saviour came into it; or that the Chriſtian parts of the World are more peaceable than the unchriſtian. Therefore theſe great promiſes of a *Pacifick kingdom*, which are expreſt in terms as high and emphatical as can be imagin'd, muſt belong to ſome other days, and ſome other ages, than what we have ſeen hitherto. *Matt.* 20.21. *Luk.* 23. 42.

You'l ſay, it may be, 'tis not the fault of the Goſpel that the World is not peaceable, but of thoſe that profeſs it, and do not practiſe it. This is true, but it does not anſwer the Prophecy; for that makes no ſuch exception. And by ſuch a reſerve as this, you may elude any Prophecy. So the *Jews* ſay, Their *Meſſiah* defers his coming beyond the time appointed by Prophecy, becauſe of their ſins: but we do not allow this for a good reaſon. The *Iſraelites* had their promiſed *Canaan*, tho' they had render'd themſelves unworthy of it; and by this method of interpreting Prophecies, all the happineſs and glory promiſed in the Millennial kingdom of Chriſt may come to nothing, upon a pretended forfeiture. Threatnings indeed may have a tacit condition; God may be better than his word, and, upon repentance, divert his judgments; but he cannot be worſe than his word, or fail of performance, when, without any condition expreſt, he promiſes or propheſies good things to come. This would deſtroy all aſſurance of hope or faith. Laſtly, This Prophecy concerning Pacifick times or a *Pacifick kingdom*, is in the 65*th* chap. ſubjoyn'd to the *Renovation of the Heavens and the Earth*, and ſeveral marks of a change in the Natural World; which things we know did not come to paſs at the firſt coming of our Saviour: there was no change of Nature then, nor has been ever ſince. And therefore this happy change, both in the Natural and Moral World, is yet to come. *Iſa.* 65.

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But, as we ſaid before, we do not ſpeak this excluſively of the firſt coming of our Saviour, as to other parts of theſe Prophecies; for no doubt that was one great deſign of them. And in the Prophecies of the old Teſtament, there are often three gradations, or gradual accompliſhments; The firſt, in ſome King of *Iſrael*, or ſome Perſon or affair relating to *Iſrael*, as National onely. The ſecond, in the Meſſiah at his firſt coming. And the laſt, in the Meſſiah, and his Kingdom at his ſecond coming. And that which we affirm and contend for, is, that the Prophecies fore-mention'd have not a final and total accompliſhment, either in the Nation of the *Jews*, or at the firſt coming of our Saviour. And this we 'bide by.

The next Prophet that we mention'd, as a witneſs of the future kingdom of Chriſt, is *David*. Who, in his Pſalms, ſeems to be pleas'd with this ſubject above all others; And when he is moſt exalted in his thoughts and Prophetical raptures, the Spirit carries him into the kingdom of the Meſſiah, to contemplate its glory, to ſing praiſes to its King, and triumph over his Enemies: *Pſal.*68. *Let God ariſe, let his enemies be ſcattered: Let them alſo that hate him flie before him. As ſmoke is driven away, ſo drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, ſo let the wicked periſh at the preſence of God. But let the Righteous be glad, &c.* The plain ground he goes upon in this Pſalm, is the Deliverance out of *Ægypt*, and bringing the *Iſraelites* into the Land of *Canaan*; But when he is once upon the wing, he ſoars to an higher pitch: from the type to the Antitype: To the days of the Meſſiah, the Aſcenſion of our Saviour; and, at length, to his kingdom and dominion over all the Earth. The 45*th.* Pſalm is an *Epithalamium* to Chriſt and the Church, or to the *Lamb* and his *Spouſe*. And when that will be, and in what ſtate, we may learn from St. *John*, *Apoc.* 19. 7, 8. and *ch.* 21. 2, 9. Namely, after the deſtruction of *Babylon*, in the *new Jeruſalem* glory. The words and matter of the two Prophets anſwer to one another; Here, in this Pſalm, there is a fight and victory celebrated, as well as a marriage: and ſo there is in that 19*th.* Chapter of St. *John*. Here, the Prophet ſays, *Gird thy Sword upon thy*

Ver. 18.

Ver. 32, *&c.*

Pſ. 45. 3, 4, 6.

thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; The Scepter of thy kingdom is a right Scepter, &c. There St. *John* says, having describ'd a Conquerour on a white Horse, *Out of his mouth goeth a sharp Sword, that with it he should smite the Nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of Iron: and he treadeth the Wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his Vesture and on his thigh a Name written, KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS.* This is the same glorious Conquerour and Bridegroom in both places: And this Victory is not gain'd, nor these Nuptials compleated till the second coming of our Saviour. *Apoc.* 19. 15, 16.

In many other Psalms, there are reflections upon this happy kingdom, and the triumph of Christ over his Enemies: as *Psal.* 2. *Psal.* 9. *Psal.* 21. and 24. and 47. and 85. and 110. and others. In these, and such like Psalms, there are lineaments and colours of a fairer state, than any we have yet seen upon Earth. Not but that in their first instances and grounds they may sometimes respect the state of *Israel*, or the Evangelical state: but the eye of the Prophet goes further, this does not terminate his sight: His Divine enthusiasme reaches into another World: A world of *Peace* and *Justice*, and *Holiness*: of Joy, and Victory, and Triumph over all the wicked: and consequently such a World, as neither we, nor our Fathers, have yet seen.

This is an account of two Prophets, *David* and *Isaiah*: and of what they have more openly declar'd concerning the future kingdom of Christ. But to verifie St. *Peter*'s words, in that forementioned place, *Act.* 3. 21. *viz.* that all the *Holy Prophets since the World began*, have spoken of the Restauration of all things at the second coming of Christ. I say, to verifie this assertion of St. *Peter*'s, we must suppose, that, where the Prophets speak of the Restauration and future glory of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, they do, under those Types, represent to us the glory and happiness of the Church in the future kingdom of Christ. And most of the

Prophets, in this ſence, and under theſe forms, have ſpoken of this kingdom: In foretelling the Reſtauration of *Jeruſalem* and *Sion*; and happy days, peace, plenty, and proſperity to the People of *Iſrael*.

Moſt of the Prophets, I ſay, from *Moſes* to *Malachy*, have ſpoken of this *Reſtauration*. *Moſes* in the 30*th*. of *Deut. ver*. 4, 5, 9. *David*, in many of thoſe Pſalms we have cited. *Iſaiah*, beſides the places forementiond, treats amply of this ſubject, *Chap*. 51. and in ſeveral other places.* So likewiſe the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Hoſea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Micah*, *Zephany*, *Haggai*, *Zachary*, *Malachy*. All theſe have, either expreſly, or under the types of *Jeruſalem* and *Sion*, foretold happy days, and a glorious triumph to the Church of God. And ſeeing in the new Teſtament, and in the Prophecies of St. *John*, the Chriſtian Church is ſtill repreſented, as under perſecution and diſtreſs, till the fall of Anti-chriſt, and the Millennial Kingdom; 'Tis then, and not till then, that we muſt expect the full accompliſhment of theſe Prophecies; The *Reſtauration* that St. *Peter* ſays was ſpoken of, by *all the Prophets:* and the *myſtery*, which St. *John* ſays, (*Apoc*. 10. 7.) was *declared by his Servants the Prophets*, and would be finiſh'd under the 7*th*. *Trumpet*, which uſhers in the Kingdom of Chriſt.

* *Iſaiah ch*. 11. *ch*. 43. *ch*. 49. 13, *&c*. *ch*. 66. *Ezekiel, ch*. 28. *ch*. 37. *Hoſ*. *ch*. 3. *&* *ch*. 14. *Joel* 3. 18. *Amos, ch*. 9. *Obad*. *ver*. 17, *&c*. *Mich*. *ch*. 4. *ch*. 5. *Zeph*. 3. 14, *&c*. *Haggai, ch*. 2. *Zac*. 2. 10, *&c*. *&* *ch*. 9. 9, *&c*. *&* *ch*. 14. *Mala*. *ch*. 3. *ch*. 4.

It would be too long to examine all theſe places in the Prophets, which you may conſult at leiſure. However it cannot ſeem ſtrange that *Jeruſalem* ſhould be us'd in a typical or allegorical ſence, ſeeing we often find ſuch applications of it in the new Teſtament: as *Gal*. 4. 26. *Hebr*. 12. 22. *Apoc*. 3. 12. And 'tis very natural that *Jeruſalem reſtor'd*, ſhould ſignifie the ſame thing as *New Jeruſalem*; and therefore that St. *John*, by his *New Jeruſalem*, intended the ſame thing, or the ſame ſtate, that the ancient Prophets did by their Reſtauration of *Jeruſalem*. And if neither can be underſtood in a literal ſence, which, I believe, you will not contend for: they muſt both be interpreted of the future happineſs and glory of the Church in the Kingdom of Chriſt.

But to conclude this point wholly as to Scripture; If we make reflection upon all the paſſages al-

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ledg'd in this and the foregoing Chapter, whether out of the Old or New Teſtament, we muſt at leaſt acknowledge thus much; That there are happy days, at one time or other: Days of Peace and Righteouſneſs: of Joy and Triumph: of external Proſperity and internal Sanctity: when Vertue and Innocency ſhall be in the Throne, and Vice and vitious Men out of power or credit. That there are ſuch happy days propheſied of in Scripture, and promiſed to the Church of God. Whether you call this the *Reign of Chriſt* and of his Saints, or by any other name, it is not material at preſent to determine; let the title be what you will, as to the ſubſtance it cannot be denied to be a general doctrine of Prophetical Scripture. And we muſt not imagine, that the Prophets writ like the Poets: feigned an Idea of a Romantick ſtate, that never was, nor ever will be; only to pleaſe their own fancies, or the credulous people. Neither is it the ſtate of Heaven and eternal life that is here meant or intended: For, beſides that they had little or no light concerning thoſe Notions, in the Old Teſtament: The Prophets generally in their deſcription of this happineſs, either expreſs the Earth, or at leaſt give plain marks of a Terreſtrial ſtate. Wherefore the only queſtion that remains, is this, *Whether* theſe happy Days are paſt already, or to come: Whether this bleſſed ſtate of the Church is behind us, or before us: whether our predeceſſors have enjoy'd it, or our poſterity is to expect it? For we are very ſure that it is not preſent; The World is full of Wars, and rumours of wars: of vice and knavery, of oppreſſion and perſecution: and theſe are things directly contrary to the genius and characters of the ſtate which we look after.

And if we look for it in times paſt, we can go no further back than the beginning of Chriſtianity. For S. *John*, the laſt of the Apoſtles, propheſied of theſe times, as to come: and plac'd them at the end of his ſyſteme of Prophecies; whereby one might conclude that they are not only within the compaſs of the Chriſtian ages, but far advanc'd into them. But however, not to inſiſt upon that at preſent, where will you find a thouſand years, from the birth of

Chriſtianity to this preſent age, that deſerves the name, or anſwers to the characters of this *Pure* and *Pacifick* ſtate of the Church. The firſt ages of Chriſtianity, as they were the moſt pure, ſo likewiſe were they the leaſt peaceable. Continually, more or leſs, under the Perſecution of the Heathen Emperours; and ſo far from being the reign and Empire of Chriſt and his Saints over the Nations, that Chriſtians were then, every where, in ſubjection or ſlavery; A poor, feeble, helpleſs people, thruſt into Priſons, or thrown to the Lyons, at the pleaſure of their Princes or Rulers. 'Tis true, when the Empire became Chriſtian under *Conſtantine*, in the fourth Century, there was, for a time, peace and proſperity in the Church, and a good degree of Purity and Piety. But that peace was ſoon diſturb'd, and that piety ſoon corrupted. The growing pride and ambition of the Eccleſiaſticks, and their eaſineſs to admit or introduce Superſtitious Practices, deſtroy'd the purity of the Church. And as to the peace of it, Their conteſts about opinions and doctrines, tore the Chriſtians themſelves into pieces; and, ſoon after, an inundation of Barbarous People fell into Chriſtendom, and put it all into flames and confuſion. After this Eruption of the Northern Nations, *Mahometaniſm* roſe in the Eaſt; and ſwarms of *Saracens*, like armies of Locuſts, invaded, conquer'd, and planted their religion in ſeveral parts of the *Roman* Empire and of the Chriſtianiz'd World. And can we call ſuch times the Reign of Chriſt, or the impriſonment of Satan? In the following ages, the *Turks* over-run the Eaſtern Empire and the *Greek* Church, and ſtill hold that miſerable people in ſlavery. Providence ſeems to have ſo order'd affairs, that the Chriſtian World ſhould never be without a WOE upon it, leſt it ſhould fanſie it ſelf already in thoſe happy days of Peace and Proſperity, which are reſerv'd for future times. Laſtly, whoſoever is ſenſible of the corruptions and perſecutions of the Church of *Rome*, ſince ſhe came to her greatneſs; whoſoever allows her to be *myſtical Babylon*, which muſt fall before the kingdom of Chriſt comes on; will think that kingdom duly plac'd by S. *John* at

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the end of his Prophecies, concerning the Christian Church: and that there still *remains, according* to the words of S. *Paul*, (Hebr. 4. 9.) *a Sabbatism to the people of God.*

CHAP. VI.

The sence and testimony of the Primitive Church concerning the Millennium, *or future kingdom of Christ: from the times of the Apostles to the* Nicene *Council. The second Proposition laid down. When, by what means, and for what reasons, that doctrine was afterwards neglected or discountenanc'd.*

YOU have heard the voice of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, declaring the future kingdom of Christ. Next to these, the *Primitive Fathers* are accounted of good authority; Let us therefore now enquire into their Sence concerning this Doctrine; that we may give satisfaction to all parties; And both those that are guided by Scripture alone, and those that have a Veneration for Antiquity, may find proofs suitable to their inclinations and judgment.

And to make few words of it, we will lay down this Conclusion, *That the Millennial kingdom of Christ was the general doctrine of the Primitive Church, from the times of the Apostles to the* Nicene *Council*; inclusively. S. *John* out-liv'd all the rest of the Apostles, and towards the latter end of his life, being banish'd into the Isle of *Pathmos*, he writ his *Apocalypse*; wherein he hath given us a more full and distinct account of the Millennial kingdom of Christ, than any of the Prophets or Apostles before him. *Papias*, Bishop of *Hierapolis*, and Martyr; one of S. *John*'s Auditors, as *Irenæus* testifies; taught the same doctrine after S. *John*. *Iren. lib. 5. c. 33.*

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He was the familiar friend of *Polycarp*, another of St. *John*'s Diſciples; and either from him, or immediately from St. *John*'s mouth, he might receive this doctrine. That he taught it in the Church, is agreed on by all hands; both by thoſe that are his followers, as *Ireneus*; and thoſe that are not well-wiſhers to this doctrine, as *Euſebius* and *Jerome*.

There is alſo another chanel wherein this doctrine is traditionally deriv'd from St. *John*, namely by the Clergy of *Aſia*; as *Irenæus* tells us in the ſame Chapter. For, arguing the point, he ſhows that the Bleſſing promis'd to *Jacob* from his Father *Iſaac*, was not made good to him in this life, and therefore he ſays, *without doubt thoſe words had a further aim and proſpect upon the times of the kingdom*: (ſo they us'd to call the Millennial ſtate) *when the Juſt riſing from the dead, ſhall reign: and when Nature renew'd and ſet at liberty, ſhall yield plenty and abundance of all things; being bleſt with the dew of Heaven, and a great fertility of the Earth. According as has been related by thoſe Eccleſiaſticks or Clergy, who ſee St.* John, *the Diſciple of Chriſt: and heard of him* WHAT OUR LORD HAD TAUGHT CONCERNING THOSE TIMES. This, you ſee, goes to the Fountain-head. The Chriſtian Clergy receive it from St. *John*, and St. *John* relates it from the mouth of our Saviour.

So much for the Original authority of this doctrine, as a Tradition: that it was from St. *John*, and by him from Chriſt. And as to the propagation and prevailing of it in the primitive Church, we can bring a witneſs beyond all exception, *Juſtin Martyr*, contemporary with *Irenæus*, and his Senior. He ſays, *that himſelf, and all the Orthodox Chriſtians of his time, did acknowledge the Reſurrection of the fleſh* (ſuppoſe the firſt reſurrection) *and a thouſand years reign in Jeruſalem reſtor'd*, or in the new Jeruſalem. *According as the Prophets, Ezekiel, and Iſaiah, and Others, atteſt with common conſent.* As St. *Peter* had ſaid before, *Act.* 3. 21. *That all the Prophets had ſpoken of it.* Then he quotes the *65th. Chapter* of *Iſaiah*, which is a bulwork for this doctrine, that never can be broken. And to ſhew the *Jew*, with whom he had this diſcourſe, that it was the ſence of

Dial. with Tryphon *the Jew.*

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our Prophets, as well as of theirs, He tells him, that *a certain Man amongst us Christians, by name John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in a Revelation made to him did propheſie, that the faithful believers in Christ should live a thousand years in the new Jerusalem; and after that should be the general Resurrection and day of Judgment.* Thus you have the thoughts and sentiment of *Justin Martyr*, as to himself: as to all the reputed Orthodox of his time; As to the sence of the Prophets in the old Testament, and as to the sence of St. *John* in the *Apocalypse*. All conspiring in confirmation of the Millenary doctrine.

To these three witnesses, *Papias*, *Irenæus*, and *Justin Martyr*, we may add two more within the second age of the Church: *Melito*, Bishop of *Sardis*, and St. *Barnabas*, or whosoever was the Author of the Epistle under his name. This *Melito*, by some is thought to be the Angel of the Church of *Sardis*, to whom St. *John* directs the Epistle to that Church: *Apoc.* 3. 1. But I do not take him to be so ancient; However he was Bishop of that place, at least in the second Century, and a Person of great Sanctity and Learning. He writ many Books, as you may see in St. *Jerome*: and, as He notes out of *Tertullian*, *was by most Christians reputed a Prophet.* He was also a declar'd *Millenary*, and is recorded as such, both by *Jerome* and *Gennadius*. As to the Epistle of *Barnabas*, which we mention'd, it must be very ancient, whosoever is the Author of it, and before the third Century; seeing it is often cited by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who was himself within the second Century. The genius of it is very much Millenarian, in the interpretation of the *Sabbath*, the *promis'd Land*, a *Day* for a *thousand years*, and concerning the *Renovation of the World.* In all which, He follows the foot-steps of the Orthodox of those times: that is, of the *Millenarians*.

de Script. Eccles.

Dogm. Eccl. c. 55.

So much for the first and second Centuries of the Church. By which short account it appears, that the Millenary doctrine was *Orthodox* and *Catholick* in those early days. For these Authors do not set it down as a private opinion of their own, but as a *Christian doctrine*, or an *Apostolical Tradition*. 'Tis remarkable what

what *Papias* ſays of himſelf, and his way of learning, In his Book call'd, *The Explanation of the Words of the Lord*, as St. *Jerome* gives us an account of it: He ſays in his Preface, *He did not follow various opinions, but had the Apoſtles for his Authors. And that he conſider'd what* Andrew, *what* Peter *ſaid*; *what* Philip, *what* Thomas, *and other Diſciples of the Lord. As alſo what* Ariſtion, *and* John *the Senior, Diſciples of the Lord, what they ſpoke. And that he did not profit ſo much by reading Books, as by the living voice of theſe perſons which reſounded from them to that day.* This hath very much the air of truth and ſincerity, and of a Man that, in good earneſt, ſought after the Chriſtian doctrine, from thoſe that were the moſt authentick Teachers of it. I know *Euſebius* in his *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, gives a double Character of this *Papias*; In one place, he calls him, *A very eloquent Man in all things, and skilful in Scripture*; and in another, he makes him a man of a *ſmall underſtanding*. But what reaſon there is to ſuſpect *Euſebius* of partiality in this point of the *Millennium*; we ſhall make appear hereafter. However, we do not depend upon the learning of *Papias*, or the depth of his underſtanding: allow him but to be an honeſt man, and a fair witneſs, and 'tis all we deſire. And we have little reaſon to queſtion his teſtimony in this point, ſeeing it is backt by others of good credit; and alſo becauſe there is no counter-evidence, nor any witneſs that appears againſt him. For there is not extant, either the Writing, Name, or Memory, of any Perſon, that conteſted this doctrine in the firſt or ſecond Century. I ſay, that call'd in queſtion this Millenary doctrine, propos'd after a Chriſtian manner; unleſs ſuch Hereticks as deny'd the Reſurrection wholly: or ſuch Chriſtians as deny'd the divine authority of the Apocalypſe.

De Script. Eccleſ.

Vide Hieron. Epiſt. 28. ad Lucinium.

We proceed now to the third Century. Where you find *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Victorinus*, Biſhop and Martyr: *Nepos Ægyptius*, *Cyprian*, and, at the end of it, *Lactantius*: All openly profeſſing, or implicitly favouring the Millenary doctrine. We do not mention *Clemens Alexandrinus*, contemporary with *Tertullian*, becauſe he hath not any thing, that I know of, expreſly either for,

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or againſt the *Millennium*. But he takes notice that the *Seventh Day* hath been accounted *Sacred*, both by the Hebrews and Greeks, becauſe of the *Revolution* of the *World*, and the *Renovation of all things*. And giving this as a reaſon why they kept that day *Holy*, ſeeing there is not a Revolution of the World every ſeven days, it can be in no other ſence than as the *Seventh Day* repreſents the *ſeventh Millenary*, in which the Renovation of the World and the kingdom of Chriſt, is to be. As to *Tertullian*, S. *Jerome* reckons him, in the firſt place, amongſt the Latin *Millenaries*. And tho' his Book, about the *Hope* of the *Faithful*, as alſo that about *Paradiſe*, which ſhould have given us the greateſt light in this affair, be both loſt or ſuppreſs'd; yet there are ſufficient indications of his Millenary opinion in his Tracts againſt *Marcion*, and againſt *Hermogenes*. S. *Cyprian* was *Tertullian*'s admirer, and inclines to the ſame opinion, ſo far as one can judge, in this particular; for his period of *Six thouſand years*, and making the *Seventh Millenary* the Conſummation of all, is wholly according to the Analogy of the Millenary doctrine. As to the two Biſhops, *Victorinus* and *Nepos*, S. *Jerome* vouches for them. The writings of the one are loſt, and of the other ſo chang'd, that the ſence of the Author does not appear there now. But *Lactantius*, whom we nam'd in the laſt place, does openly and profuſely teach this doctrine, in his *Divine Inſtitutions:* and with the ſame *Book 7.* aſſurance that he does other parts of the Chriſtian Doctrine. For he concludes thus, ſpeaking of the *Millennium*, *This is the Doctrine of the Holy Prophets, which we Chriſtians follow. This is our wiſdom*, &c. Yet he acknowledges there that it was kept as a myſtery or ſecret amongſt the Chriſtians, leſt the Heathens ſhould make any perverſe or odious interpretation of it. And for the ſame or like reaſon, I believe, The Book of the *Apocalypſe* was kept out of the hands of the Vulgar for ſome time, and not read publickly, leſt it ſhould be found to have ſpoken too openly of the fate of the *Roman* Empire, or of this Millennial State.

So much for the first, second, and third Century of the Church. But, by our conclusion, we engag'd to make out this proof as far as the *Nicene Council*, Inclusively. The *Nicene Council* was about the year of Christ 325. and we may reasonably suppose *Lactantius* was then living; at least he came within the time of *Constantine*'s Empire. But however the Fathers of that Council are themselves our witnesses in this point. For, in their *Ecclesiastical Forms* or *Constitutions*, in the *chapter about the Providence of God*, and *about the World*, they speak thus; *The World was made meaner or less perfect, providentially; for God foresee that man would sin. Wherefore we expect New Heavens and a New Earth, according to the holy Scriptures: at the appearance and kingdom of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* And then, as *Daniel* says (ch. 7. 18.) *The Saints of the most High shall take the kingdom. And the Earth shall be pure, holy, the land of the living, not of the dead. Which* David *foreseeing by the eye of Faith,* cryes out (Ps. 27. 13.) *I believe to see the good things of the Lord, in the land of the living. Our Saviour says, Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth,* Matt. 5. 5. *and the Prophet* Isaiah *says,* (*chap.* 26. 6.) *the feet of the meek and lowly shall tread upon it.* So you see, according to the judgment of these Fathers, there will be a kingdom of Christ upon Earth; and moreover, that it will be in the *New Heavens* and the *New Earth.* And, in both these points, they cite the Prophets and our Saviour in confirmation of them.

Thus we have discharg'd our promise and given you an account of the doctrine of the *Millennium*, or future kingdom of Christ, throughout the three first Ages of the Church: before any considerable corruptions were crept into the Christian Religion. And those Authorities of single and successive Fathers, we have seal'd up all together, with the declaration of the *Nicene* Fathers, in a Body. Those that think Tradition a rule of Faith, or a considerable motive to it, will find it hard to turn off the force of these Testimonies. And those that do not go so far, but yet have a reverence for Antiquity and the Primitive Church, will not easily produce better authorities,

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more early, more numerous, or more uncontradicted, for any article that is not fundamental. Yet these are but Seconds to the Prophets and Apostles, who are truly the Principals in this cause. I will leave them altogether, to be examin'd and weigh'd by the impartial Reader. And because they seem to me to make a full and undeniable proof, I will now at the foot of the account set down our second Proposition, which is this, *That there is a Millennial State, or a Future Kingdom of Christ and his Saints, Propheſied of and Promised, in the Old and New Testament; and receiv'd by the Primitive Church as a Christian and Catholick Doctrine.* *Propos. 2.*

HAVING dispatch'd this main point, To conclude the Chapter and this head of our discourse, It will be some satisfaction possibly to see, *How* a Doctrine so generally receiv'd and approv'd, came to decay and almost wear out of the Church, in following Ages. The Christian Millenary doctrine was not call'd into question, so far as appears from History, before the middle of the third Century; when *Dionysius Alexandrinus* writ against *Nepos*, an *Ægyptian* Bishop, who had declar'd himself upon that subject. But we do not find that this Book had any great effect; for the declaration or constitution of the *Nicene Fathers* was after: and in S. *Jerome*'s time, who writ towards the end of the fourth Century, this doctrine had so much Credit, that, He, who was its greatest adversary, yet durst not condemn it, as he says himself. *Quæ licet non sequamur, tamen damnare non possumus; quia multi Ecclesiasticorum virorum & Martyres ista dixerunt.* *Which things, or doctrines,* speaking of the Millennium, *tho' we do not follow, yet*

we cannot condemn. Becauſe many of our Church-men, and Martyrs, have affirmed theſe things. And when *Apollinarius* replyed to that Book of *Dionyſius*, S. *Jerome* ſays, that, *not only thoſe of his own Sect, but a great multitude of other Chriſtians did agree with* Apollinarius *in that particular. Ut præſagâ mente jam cernam, quantorum in me rabies concitanda ſit. That I now foreſee, how many will be enrag'd againſt me, for what I have ſpoken againſt the Millenary doctrine.*

We may therefore conclude that in S. *Jerome's* time the Millenaries made the greater party in the Church; for a little matter would not have frighted him from cenſuring their opinion. S. *Jerome* was a rough and rugged Saint, and an unfair adverſary, that uſually run down, with heat and violence, what ſtood in his way. As to his unfairneſs, he ſhews it ſufficiently in this very cauſe, for he generally repreſents the Millenary doctrine after a Judaical rather than a *Chriſtian* manner. And in reckoning up the chief Patrons of it, he always skips *Juſtin Martyr*. Who was not a man ſo obſcure as to be overlook'd: and he was a man that had declar'd himſelf ſufficiently upon this point, for he ſays, *both himſelf and all the Orthodox of his time, were of that judgment*, and applyes both the *Apocalypſe* of S. *John*, and the *65th chap.* of *Iſaiah*, for the proof of it. As we noted before.

As S. *Jerome* was an open enemy to this doctrine, ſo *Euſebius* was a back friend to it; and repreſented every thing to its diſadvantage, ſo far as was tolerably conſiſtent with the fairneſs of an Hiſtorian. He gives a ſlight character of *Papias*, without any authority for it; and brings in one *Gaius* that makes *Cerinthus* to be the author of the *Apocalypſe* and of the *Millennium*: and calls the Viſions there *monſtrous ſtories*. He himſelf is willing to ſhuffle off that Book from *John* the *Evangeliſt* to another *John* a *Presbyter*: and to ſhew his skill in the interpretation of it, he makes the *New Jeruſalem* in the *21th chap.* to be *Conſtantine's Jeruſalem*, when he turn'd the Heathen Temples there into Chriſtian. A wonderful invention. As S. *Jerome* by his flouts, ſo *Euſebius* by ſiniſter inſinuations, endeavour'd to leſſen the reputation of this doctrine; and the art they both us'd,

Eccleſ. Hiſt. 3. 22. τερατολογίας.

l. 3. 32. *de vit. Conſtan.*

us'd, was, to misrepresent it as *Judaical.* But we must not cast off every doctrine which the Jews believ'd, only for that reason; for we have the same Oracles which they had, and the same Prophets: and they have collected from them the same general doctrine that we have, namely, that *there will be an happy and pacifick state of the Church, in future times.* But as to the circumstances of this state we differ very much; They suppose the Mosaical Law will be restor'd, with all its pomp, rites, and ceremonies; whereas we suppose the Christian Worship, or something more perfect, will then take place. Yet S. *Jerome* has the confidence, even there where he speaks of the many Christian Clergy and Martyrs that held this doctrine: has the confidence, I say, to represent it, as if they held that *Circumcision, Sacrifices,* and all the Judaical rites, should then be restor'd. Which seems to me to be a great slander, and a great instance how far mens passions will carry them, in misrepresenting an opinion which they have a mind to disgrace.

But as we have reason to blame the partiality of those that opposed this doctrine, so, on the other hand, we cannot excuse the Patrons of it from all indiscretions. I believe they might partly themselves make it obnoxious; by mixing some things with it, from pretended traditions, or the Books of the Sibylls, or other private authorities, that had so sufficient warrant from Scripture; and things, sometimes, that Nature would not easily bear. Besides, in later ages, they seem to have dropt one half of the doctrine, namely, the *Renovation of Nature,* which *Irenæus, Justin Martyr,* and the Ancients, joyn inseparably with the Millennium. And by this omission, the doctrine hath been made less intelligible, and one part of it inconsistent with another. And when their pretensions were to reign upon this present Earth, and in this present state of Nature, it gave a jealousie to Temporal Princes, and gave occasion likewise to many of fanatical Spirits, under the notion of Saints, to aspire to dominion, after a violent and tumultuary manner. This I reckon as one great cause that brought the doctrine into discredit. But I hope by reducing of it to the true state, we shall cure this and other abuses, for the future. Lastly,

Laſtly, It never pleas'd the Church of *Rome*; and ſo far as the influence and authority of that would go, you may be ſure it would be depreſt and diſcountenanc'd. I never yet met with a Popiſh Doctor that held the *Millennium*; and *Baronius* would have it paſs for an Hereſie, and *Papias* for the Inventor of it; whereas, if *Irenæus* may be credited, it was receiv'd from St. *John*, and by him from the mouth of our Saviour. And neither St. *Jerome*, nor his friend Pope *Damaſus*, durſt ever condemn it for an *hereſie*. It was always indeed uneaſie, and gave offence, to the Church of *Rome*, becauſe it does not ſuite to that Scheme of Chriſtianity, which they have drawn. They ſuppoſe Chriſt reigns already, by his Vicar, the Pope: and treads upon the Necks of Emperours and Kings. And if they could but ſuppreſs the *Northern Hereſie*, as they call it, they do not know what a Millennium would ſignifie, or how the Church could be in an happier condition than ſhe is. The *Apocalypſe* of St. *John* does ſuppoſe the true Church under hardſhip and perſecution, more or leſs, for the greateſt part of the Chriſtian Ages: namely for 1260. years, while the witneſſes are in Sack-cloth. But the Church of *Rome* hath been in proſperity and greatneſs, and the commanding Church in Chriſtendom, for ſo long or longer, and hath rul'd the Nations with a Rod of Iron; ſo as that mark of the true Church, does not favour her at all. And the *Millennium* being properly a reward and triumph for thoſe that come out of Perſecution, ſuch as have liv'd always in pomp and proſperity can pretend to no ſhare in it, or benefit by it. This has made the Church of *Rome* have always an ill eye upon this doctrine, becauſe it ſeem'd to have an ill eye upon her. And as ſhe grew in ſplendor and greatneſs, ſhe eclips'd and obſcur'd it more and more: ſo that it would have been loſt out of the World as an obſolete errour, if it had not been reviv'd by ſome of the Reformation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The true state of the Millennium, according to Characters taken from Scripture; some mistakes concerning it, examin'd.

WE have made sufficient proof of a Millennial state, from Scripture and Antiquity; and upon that firm Basis have setled our second Proposition. We should now determine the *Time* and *Place* of this future kingdom of Christ: Not whether it is to be in Heaven, or upon Earth: for that we suppose determin'd already; but whether it is to be in the present Earth, and under the present constitution of Nature, or in the *New Heavens* and *New Earth*, which are promis'd after the *Conflagration*. This is to make our *Third Proposition:* and I should have proceeded immediately to the examination of it, but that I imagine it will give us some light in this affair, if we enquire further into the true state of the *Millennium*, before we determine its Time and Place.

We have already noted some *moral* Characters of the *Millennial* state; And the great *Natural* Character of it, is this in general, That it will be *Paradisiacal*. Free from all inconveniences, either of external Nature, or of our own Bodies. For my part, I do not understand how there can be any considerable degree of happiness without *Indolency*: nor how there can be Indolency, while we have such Bodies as we have now, and such an external constitution of Nature. And as there must be *Indolency*, where there is happiness; so there must not be *Indigency*, or want of any due comforts of life. For where there is *Indigency*, there is sollicitude, and distraction, and uneasiness, and fear: Passions, that do as naturally disquiet the Soul, as pain does the Body. Therefore Indolency and Plenty seem to be two essential Ingredients of every happy state; and these two in conjunction make that state we call *Paradisiacal*.

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Now the Scripture ſeems plainly to exempt the Sons of the *New Jeruſalem*, or of the *Millennium*, from all *pain* or *want*, in thoſe words, Apoc. 21. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying: neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the former things are paſſed away.* And the Lord of that kingdom, *He that ſate upon the Throne*, ſaid, *Behold I make all things new*, ver. 5. This Renovation is a reſtauration to ſome former ſtate: and I hope not to that ſtate of Indigency, and miſery, and diſeaſedneſs, which we languiſh under at preſent. But to that priſtine Paradiſiacal ſtate, which was the bleſſing of the firſt Heavens and the firſt Earth.

As Health and Plenty are the Bleſſings of Nature, ſo, in civil affairs, *Peace* is the greateſt bleſſing. And this is inſeparably annext to the *Millennium:* an indelible character of the kingdom of Chriſt. And by *Peace* we underſtand, not onely freedom from Perſecution upon religious accounts, but that *Nation ſhall not riſe up againſt Nation*, upon any account whatſoever. That bloody Monſter, *War*, that hath devour'd ſo many Millions of the Sons of *Adam*, is now at length to be chain'd up: and the Furies, that run throughout the Earth, with their Snakes and Torches, ſhall be thrown into the Abyſs, to ſting and prey upon one another. All evil and miſchievous paſſions ſhall be extinguiſh'd: and that not in men onely, but even in Brute creatures, according to the Prophets. *The Lamb and the Lyon ſhall lie down together, and the ſucking Child ſhall play with the Baſilisk.* Happy days, when not onely the Temple of *Janus* ſhall be ſhut up for a thouſand years, and the *Nations ſhall beat their Swords into plowſhares*: but all enmities and antipathies ſhall ceaſe, all acts of hoſtility, throughout all nature. And this Univerſal Peace is a demonſtration alſo of the former character, *Univerſal Plenty*: for where there is want and neceſſitouſneſs, there will be quarrelling.

Fourthly, 'Tis a kingdom of Righteouſneſs, as well as of Peace. Theſe alſo muſt go together; for unrighteous Perſons will not live long in peace, no more than

than indigent Persons. The *Psalmist* therefore joyns them together: and *Plenty* also, as their necessary preservative: in his description of the kingdom of Christ: Psal. 85. 10, 11, 12. *Mercy and truth are met together: Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the Earth, and righteousness shall look down from Heaven. Yea the Lord shall give good, and our Land shall yield her increase.* This will not be a medley-state, as the present World is, good and bad mingled together; but a *chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people.* Those that have a part in the first Resurrection, the Scripture pronounceth them *Holy and Blessed:* and says, *the second death shall have no power over them.* Satan also is bound and shut up in the bottomless Pit, and has no liberty of tempting or seducing this people, for a thousand years: but at the end of that time, he will meet with a degenerate crew, separate and aliens to the Holy City, that will make war against it, and perish in the attempt. In a word, those that are to enjoy this state, are always distinguish'd from the multitude, as People redeem'd from the Earth; That have wash'd their Robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and are represented as Victors over the World; with such other Characters as are incompetible to any but the righteous. *Apoc. 5. 9.* *ch. 7. 14.* *ch. 14. 3, 4.* *ch. 21. 27.*

Fifthly, This will be a state under a peculiar divine presence and conduct. It is not easie indeed to determine the manner of this presence, but the Scripture plainly implies some extraordinary divine presence to enlighten and enliven that state. When the *New Jerusalem* was come down, St. *John* says, *And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men: and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people: and God himself shall be with them and be their God.* And the like is promis'd to the Palm-bearing Company, *Chap.* 7. 15. where they are admitted to the priviledges of the *New Jerusalem.* When our Saviour was incarnate, and vouchsafed to dwell amongst the Children of Men, the same phrase is us'd by this same Author, Joh. 1. 14. *The Word was made flesh, and Tabernacled amongst us: and we beheld* *Apoc. 21. 3.* ἐσκήνωσεν

his glory, &c. We read it, *He dwelt amongſt us*, but render'd more cloſely, it is, *He* ſet his *Tabernacle amongſt us.* And that which the *Hebrews* call the *Shekinah*, or *divine preſence*, comes from this very word. Therefore there will be a *Shekinah* in that kingdom of Chriſt; but as to the mode of it, I am very willing to confeſs my ignorance.

שכינה *Maimon. Mor. Nev. par.* 1. *c.* 25.

The laſt Character that belongs to this ſtate, or rather to thoſe that enjoy it, is, that they are *Kings and Prieſts unto God.* This is a character often repeated in Scripture, and therefore the more to be regarded. It occurs thrice in the Apocalypſe in formal terms, *Ch.* 1. 6. *Ch.* 5. 10. *Ch.* 20. 6. And as to the Regal dignity apart, that is further expreſt, either by the *donation of a kingdom*, as in *Daniel's* phraſe, *Chap.* 7. 18, 22, 27. Or by *placing upon Thrones*, with a judicial power; which is the New Teſtament ſtyle, *Matt.* 19. 28. *Luk.* 22. 29, 30. *Revel.* 20. 4. Theſe two Titles, no doubt, are intended to comprehend the higheſt honours that we are capable of: theſe being the higheſt dignities in every kingdom; and ſuch as were by the Ancients, both in the Eaſt and in the Weſt, commonly united in one and the ſame Perſon: Their Kings being Prieſts, like *Melchiſedeck:* or as the *Roman* Emperour was *Pontifex Maximus.* But as to the Sacerdotal character, that ſeems chiefly to reſpect the temper of the mind; to ſignifie a People dedicated to God and his Service: Separate from the World, and from ſecular affairs: Spending their time in devotion and contemplation, which will be the great employments of that happy ſtate. For where there is eaſe, peace, and plenty of all things: refin'd Bodies, and purified Minds, there will be more inclination to intellectual exerciſes and entertainments: which they may attend upon, without any diſtraction, having neither want, pain, nor worldly buſineſs.

The Title of *King* implies a confluence of all things that conſtitute temporal happineſs. 'Tis the higheſt thing we can wiſh any in this World, to be a King. So as the *Regal* dignity ſeems to comprehend all the Goods of Fortune, or external felicity: And the *Sacerdotal*, the Goods of the Mind, or internal: Both which concur

concur in the constitution of true happiness. There is also a further force and emphasis in this notion, *of the Saints being made Kings*, if we consider it *comparatively*, with respect to what they were before in this World; where they were not only mean and despicable, in subjection and servility, but often under persecution, abus'd and trampled upon, by the secular and Ecclesiastical powers. But now the Scene is chang'd, and you see the reverse of Providence, according as *Abraham* said to the Rich *man, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Now they are set upon Thrones and Tribunals, who were before arraigned as Criminals, and brought before tyrannical Judicatures. They are now Laws and Law-givers to themselves: in a true state of Royal Liberty, neither under the domination of evil men, nor of their own evil passions.

Some possibly may think, that this high character of *being made Priests* and *Kings to God*, is not general to all that enjoy the *Millennium*, but a prerogative belonging to the Apostles and some of the chief Martyrs, who are eminently rewarded for their eminent services. But Scripture, as far as I perceive, applyes it to all that inherit that kingdom. *The redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, are made *kings and priests to God, and shall reign on the earth*, *Apoc.* 5. 9, 10. And in the 20*th chap. ver.* 6. all the sons of the first Resurrection are made *Priests of God and shall reign with him a thousand years.* Here is no distinction or discrimination thus far. Not that we suppose an universal equality of conditions in the Millennial state, but as to all these characters which we have given of it, I do not perceive that they are restrain'd or confin'd by Scripture to single persons, but make the general happiness of that state, and are the portion of every one that is admitted into the New Jerusalem.

Others possibly may think that this priviledge of the *first Resurrection* is not common to all that enjoy the Millennial state. For tho' S. *John*, who is the only per-

ſon that hath made expreſs mention of the *firſt Reſurrection*, and of the *thouſand years reign* of Chriſt, does joyn theſe two as the ſame thing, and common to the ſame perſons; yet I know there are ſome that would diſtinguiſh them as things of a different extent, and alſo of a different nature. They ſuppoſe the Martyrs only will riſe from the dead; and will be immediately tranſlated into Heaven, and there paſs their *Millennium* in celeſtial glory. While the Church is ſtill here below, in her *Millennium*, ſuch as it is; a ſtate indeed better than ordinary, and free from perſecution: but obnoxious to all the inconveniences of our preſent mortal life, and a medly of good and bad people, without ſeparation. This is ſuch an Idea of the *Millennium*, as, to my eye, hath neither beauty in it, nor foundation in Scripture. That the Citizens of the *New Jeruſalem* are not a miſcellaneous company, but a Community of righteous perſons, we have noted before: and that the ſtate of nature will be better than it is at preſent. But, beſides this, what warrant have they for this Aſcenſion of the Martyrs into Heaven at that time? where do we read of that in Scripture? And in thoſe things that are not matters of Natural Order, but of Divine Oeconomy, we ought to be very careful how we add to Scripture.

The Scripture ſpeaks only of the Reſurrection of the Martyrs, *Apoc.* 20.45. but not a word concerning their aſcenſion into heaven. Will that be viſible? We read of our Saviour's Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and therefore we have reaſon to affirm them both. We read alſo of the Reſurrection and aſcenſion of the *Witneſſes*, (*Apoc.* 11.) in a figurate ſence, and in that ſence we may aſſert them upon good grounds. But as to the Martyrs, we read of their Reſurrection only, without any thing expreſt or imply'd about their Aſcenſion. By what authority then ſhall we add this new notion to the hiſtory or ſcheme of the Millennium? The Scripture on the contrary, makes mention of the deſcent of the *New Jeruſalem*, *Apoc.* 21. 2. making the Earth the Theatre of all that affair. And the Camp of the Saints is upon the Earth, *ver.* 9. and theſe Saints are the ſame perſons, ſo far as can be collected from the

text,

text, that rise *from the dead, and reign'd with Christ*, and were *Priests to God. ver.* 4, 5, 6. Neither is there any distinction made, that I find, by S. *John*, of two sorts of Saints in the *Millennium*, the one in Heaven, and the other upon Earth. Lastly, The four and twenty Elders, *ch.* 5. 10. tho' they were *Kings* and *Priests unto God*, were content to reign upon Earth. Now who can you suppose of a superiour order to these four and twenty Elders: Whether they represent the twelve Patriarchs and twelve Apostles, or whomsoever they represent, they are plac'd next to him that sit upon the Throne, and they have Crowns of Gold upon their heads, *ch.* 4. 4. there can be no marks of honour and dignity greater than these are; and therefore seeing these highest Dignitaries in the Millennium or future kingdom of Christ, are to reign upon Earth, there is no ground to suppose the assumption of any other into Heaven upon that account, or upon that occasion. *chap.* 11. 16.

This is a short and general draught of the Millennial state, or future Reign of the Saints, according to Scripture. Wherein I have endeavour'd to rectifie some mistakes or misconceptions about it: That viewing it in its true nature, we may be the better able to judge, when and where it will obtain. Which is the next thing to be consider'd.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The Third Propoſition laid down, concerning the time and place of the Millennium. *Several Arguments us'd to prove that it cannot be till after the Conflagration: and that the New Heavens and the New Earth are the true Seat of the bleſſed* Millennium.

WE come now to the Third and laſt Head of our Diſcourſe: To determine the *Time* and *Place* of the *Millennium.* And ſeeing it is indifferent whether the proofs lead or follow the Concluſion, we will lay down the Concluſion in the firſt place, that our buſineſs may be more in view; and back it with proofs in the following part of the Chapter. Our
Propoſ. 3. Third and laſt Propoſition therefore is this, *That the Bleſſed Millennium,* (properly ſo called) *according as it is deſcrib'd in Scripture, cannot obtain in the preſent Earth, nor under the preſent conſtitution of Nature and Providence; but is to be celebrated in the New Heavens and New Earth, after the Conflagration.* This Propoſition, it may be, will ſeem a Paradox or ſingularity to many, even of thoſe that believe a *Millennium*; We will therefore make it the buſineſs of this Chapter, to ſtate it, and prove it; by ſuch Arguments as are manifeſtly founded in Scripture and in Reaſon.

And to prevent miſtakes, we muſt premiſe this in the firſt place; That, tho' the Bleſſed *Millennium* will not be in this Earth, yet we allow that the ſtate of the Church here, will grow much better than it is at preſent. There will be a full *Reſurrection of the Witneſſes,* and an *Aſcenſion* into power, and the tenth part of the City will fall; which things imply eaſe from Perſecution, The Converſion of ſome part of the Chriſtian World to the reformed Faith, and a conſiderable diminution of the power of Antichriſt. But this

this ſtill comes far ſhort of the happineſs and glory wherein the future Kingdom of Chriſt is repreſented. Which cannot come to paſs till the *Man of Sin* be deſtroy'd, with a total deſtruction. After the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, there is a Third *WOE* yet to come: and how long that will laſt, does not appear. If it bear proportion with the preceding *WOES*, it may laſt ſome hundreds of years. And we cannot imagine the *Millennium* to begin till that *WOE* be finiſh'd. As neither till the *Vials* be poured out, in the 15*th chap.* which cannot be all pour'd out till after the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes; thoſe *Vials* being the laſt plagues that compleat the deſtruction of Antichriſt. Wherefore allowing that the Church, upon the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of the Witneſſes, will be advanc'd into a better condition, yet that condition cannot be the Millennial ſtate; where the Beaſt is utterly deſtroy'd, and Satan bound, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit.

This being premis'd, let us now examine what grounds there are for the Tranſlation of that bleſſed ſtate into the New Heavens and New Earth: ſeeing that thought, it may be, to many perſons, will appear new and extraordinary. In the firſt place, We ſuppoſe it out of diſpute, that there will be New Heavens and a New Earth after the Conflagration. This was our firſt Propoſition, and we depend upon it, as ſufficiently prov'd both from Scripture and Antiquity. This being admitted, How will you ſtock this New Earth? What uſe will you put it to? 'Twill be a much nobler Earth, and better built than the preſent: and 'tis pity it ſhould only float about, empty and uſeleſs, in the wild Air. If you will not make it the ſeat and habitation of the Juſt in the bleſſed *Millennium*, what will you make it? How will it turn to account? what hath Providence deſign'd it for? We muſt not ſuppoſe New Worlds made without counſel or deſign. And as, on the one hand, you cannot tell what to do with this New Creation, if it be not thus employ'd: ſo, on the other hand, it is every way fitted and ſuited to be an happy and Paradiſiacal habitation, and anſwers all the natural Characters of the Millen-

Millennial ſtate; which is a great preſumption that it is deſign'd for it.

But to argue this more cloſely upon Scripture-grounds. St. *Peter* ſays, the Righteous ſhall inhabit the new Heavens and the new Earth: 2 *Pet.* 3. 13. *Nevertheleſs, according to his promiſe, we look for new Heavens and new Earth, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS:* that is, a Righteous people, as we have ſhewn before. But who are theſe righteous People? that's the great queſtion. If you compare St. *Peter's* new Heavens and new Earth with St. *John's*, *Apoc.* 21. 1, 2. it will go far towards the reſolution of this queſtion: For St. *John* ſeems plainly to make the Inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem* to be in this *New Earth. I ſaw*, ſays he, *new Heavens and a new Earth*: and the *New Jeruſalem deſcending from God out of Heaven*; therefore deſcending into this *new Earth*, which he had mention'd immediately before. And there *the Tabernacle of God was with men, ver.* 3. and there He that ſate upon the Throne, ſaid, *Behold I make all things new.* Referring ſtill to this new Heavens and new Earth, as the Theater where all theſe things are acted, or all theſe Scenes exhibited: from the firſt Verſe to the eighth. Now the New Jeruſalem ſtate being the ſame with the Millennial, if the one be in the new Heavens and new Earth, the other is there alſo. And this interpretation of St. *John's* words is confirm'd and fully aſſur'd to us by the Prophet *Iſaiah*; who alſo placeth the joy and rejoycing of the *new Jeruſalem* in the new Heavens and new Earth: Chap. 65. 17, 18. *For behold I create new Heavens and a new Earth: and the former ſhall not be remembred: but be you glad and rejoyce for ever in that which I create: for behold I create Jeruſalem a rejoycing and her people a joy.* Namely in that new Heavens and new Earth. Which anſwers to St. *John's* Viſion of the new *Jeruſalem* being let down upon the new Earth.

To theſe reaſons, and deductions from Scripture, we might add the teſtimony of ſeveral of the Fathers; I mean of thoſe that were Millenaries. For we are ſpeaking now to ſuch as believe the *Millennium*, but place it in the preſent Earth before the Renovation;

where-

whereas the ancient Millenaries ſuppos'd the regeneration and renovation of the World before the kingdom of Chriſt came. As you may ſee in * *Irenæus*, a *Juſtin Martyr*, b *Tertullian*, c *Lactantius*, and *d* the Author *ad Orthodoxos*. And the neglect of this, I look upon as one reaſon, as we noted before, that brought that doctrine into diſcredit and decay. For when they plac'd the kingdom of the Saints upon this Earth, it became more capable of being abus'd, by fanatical ſpirits, to the diſturbance of the World, and the invaſion of the rights of the Magiſtrates, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, under that notion of Saints. And made them alſo dream of ſenſual pleaſures, ſuch as they ſee in this life: Or at leaſt gave an occaſion and opportunity to thoſe, that had a mind to make the doctrine odious, of charging it with theſe conſequences. All theſe abuſes are cut off, and theſe ſcandals prevented, by placing the Millennium aright. Namely, not in this preſent life, or on this preſent Earth, but in the new Creation, where peace and righteouſneſs will dwell. And this is our firſt argument why we place the Millennium in the new Heavens and new Earth: And 'tis taken partly, you ſee, from the reaſon of the thing it ſelf, the difficulty of aſſigning any other uſe of the New Earth, and its fitneſs for this; and partly from Scripture-evidence, and partly from Antiquity.

* *li. 5. ch. 32, &c.*
a *Dial. cum Tryph.*
b *Contra Marc.*
c *Li. 7.*
d *Quæſt. & reſpon. 93.*

The ſecond argument for our opinion, is this; The preſent conſtitution of Nature will not bear that happineſs, that is promis'd in the Millennium, or is not conſiſtent with it. The diſeaſes of our Bodies, the diſorders of our paſſions, the incommodiouſneſs of external Nature; Indigency, ſervility, and the unpeaceableneſs of the World; Theſe are things inconſiſtent with the happineſs that is promis'd in the kingdom of Chriſt. But theſe are conſtant attendants upon this life, and inſeparable from the preſent ſtate of Nature. Suppoſe the Millennium was to begin Nine or Ten Years hence, as ſome pretend it will. How ſhall this World, all on a ſudden, be metamorphos'd into that happy ſtate? No more *ſorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor death*, ſays St. *John*: *All former things are paſt away*. But how paſt away? Shall we not have the ſame Bo-

Apoc. 21. 4

dies: and the ſame external Nature: and the ſame corruptions of the Air: and the ſame exceſſes and intemperature of Seaſons? Will there not be the ſame barrenneſs of the ground: the ſame number of People to be fed: and muſt they not get their living by the ſweat of their brows, with ſervile labour and drudgery? How then are all former evils paſt away? And as to publick affairs, while there are the ſame neceſſities of humane life, and a diſtinction of Nations, thoſe Nations ſometimes will have contrary intereſts, will claſh and interfere one with another: whence differences, and conteſts, and Wars will ariſe, and the *Thouſand Years Truce*, I am afraid, will be often broken. We might add alſo, that if our Bodies be not chang'd, we ſhall be ſubject to the ſame appetites, and the ſame paſſions: and upon thoſe, vices will grow: as bad fruit upon a bad Tree. To conclude, ſo long as our Bodies are the ſame: external Nature the ſame: The neceſſities of humane life the ſame: which things are the roots of evil; you may call it a *Millennium*, or what you pleaſe, but there will be ſtill diſeaſes, vices, Wars, tears and cries, pain and ſorrow in this *Millennium*; And if ſo, 'tis a *Millennium* of your own making; for that which the Prophets deſcribe is quite another thing.

Furthermore, if you ſuppoſe the Millennium will be upon this Earth, and begin, it may be, ten or twenty years hence, How will it be introduc'd: how ſhall we know when we are in it, or when we enter upon it? If we continue the ſame, and all Nature continue the ſame, we ſhall not diſcern when we ſlip into the Millennium. And as to the Moral ſtate of it, ſhall we all, on a ſudden, *become Kings and Prieſts to God?* wherein will that change conſiſt, and how will it be wrought? St. *John* makes the *Firſt Reſurrection* introduce the Millennium; and that's a conſpicuous mark and boundary. But as to the modern or vulgar Millennium, I know not how 'tis uſher'd in. Whether they ſuppoſe a viſible reſurrection of the Martyrs, and a viſible Aſcenſion: and that to be a Signal to all the World that the Jubilee is beginning: or whether 'tis gradual and creeps upon us inſenſibly: or the fall of the Beaſt

marks

marks it. These things need both explication and proof; for to me they seem either arbitrary, or unintelligible.

But to return more closely to our Subject. That which gives me the greatest scandal in this doctrine of the vulgar Millennium, is, their joyning things together that are really inconsistent; a natural World of one colour, and a moral World of another. They will make us happy in spight of Nature: as the Stoicks would make a man happy in *Phalaris his Bull*; so must the Saints be in full bliss in the Millennium, tho' they be under a fit of the Gout or of the Stone. For my part, I could never reconcile pain to happiness: It seems to me to destroy and drown all pleasure, as a loud noise does a still voice. It affects the Nerves with violence, and over-bears all other motions. But if, according to this modern supposition, they have the same Bodies, and breath the same air, in the Millennium, as we do now, there will be both private and Epidemical distempers, in the same manner as now; Suppose then a Plague comes and sweeps away half an hundred thousand Saints in the Millennium, is this no prejudice or dishonour to the State? Or a War makes a Nation desolate: or, in single Persons, a lingring disease makes life a burthen: or a burning Fever, or a violent Colick tortures them to death. Where such evils as these reign, christen the thing what you will, it can be no better than a Mock-Millennium. Nor shall I ever be perswaded that such a state as our present life, where an akeing Tooth, or an akeing Head, does so discompose the Soul, as to make her unfit for business, study, devotion, or any useful employment: And that all the powers of the mind, all its vertue, and all its wisdom, are not able to stop these little motions, or to support them with tranquillity: I can never perswade my self, I say, that such a state was designed by God or Nature, for a state of happiness.

Our third argument is this; The future kingdom of Christ will not take place, till the kingdom of Antichrist be wholly destroy'd. But that will not be wholly destroy'd till the end of the World, and the

appearing of our Saviour. Therefore the Millennium will not be till then. Christ and Antichrist cannot reign upon Earth together: their kingdoms are opposite, as Light to darkness. Besides, the kingdom of Christ is universal, extends to all the Nations, and leaves no room for other kingdoms at that time. Thus it is describ'd in *Daniel*, in the place mention'd before, *Chap.* 7. 13, 14. *I saw in the Night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; And there was given him dominion and glory*, and a kingdom; *that all People, Nations, and Languages, should serve him.* And again, ver. 27. *And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most High; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.* The same character of universality is given to the kingdom of Christ by *David*, *Isaiah*, and other Prophets. But the most direct proof of this, is from the *Apocalypse*: where the *Beast* and *false Prophet* are thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, (*Chap.* 19. 20.) before the Millennium comes on: *ch.* 20. This, *being cast into a Lake of fire burning with brimstone*, must needs signifie utter destruction. Not a diminution of power onely, but a total perdition and consumption. And that this was before the Millennium, both the order of the narration shows, and its place in the Prophecy; And also because notice is taken, at the end of the Millennium, of the Beast and false Prophet's being in the Lake of fire, as of a thing past, and formerly transacted. For when Satan, at length, is thrown into the same Lake, 'tis said, He is thrown into the Lake of fire and brimstone, *where the Beast and false Prophet are: Apoc.* 20. 10. They were there before, it seems; namely, at the beginning of the Millennium; and now at the conclusion of it, the Devil is thrown in to them. Besides, the Ligation of Satan proves this point effectually. For so long as Antichrist reigns, Satan cannot be said to be bound; but he is bound at the beginning of the Millennium, therefore Antichrist's reign was then totally expir'd. Lastly, the destruction of *Babylon*, and the destruction

Psal. 2. & *Psal.* 72. *Isa.* 2. 2.

of

of Antichrist go together: but you see *Babylon* utterly and finally destroy'd, (*Apoc.* 18. *and* 19.) before the Millennium comes on. I say *utterly and finally destroy'd.* For she is not onely said to be made an utter desolation, but to be consum'd by fire: and absorpt as a Milstone thrown into the Sea: and that she shall be found no more at all, *Chap.* 18. 21. Nothing can express a total and universal destruction more effectually, or more emphatically. And this is before the Millennium begins; as you may see both by the order of the Prophecies, and particularly, in that upon this destruction, the Hallelujah's are sung, *Chap.* 19. and concluded thus, (*ver.* 6, 7.) *Hallelujah, for the God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoyce and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made her self ready.* This, I suppose, every one allows to be the Millennial state, which now approaches, and is making ready, upon the destruction of *Babylon.*

Thus much for the first part of our argument, that the kingdom of Christ will not take place, till the kingdom of Antichrist be wholly destroy'd. We are now to prove the second part: That the kingdom of Antichrist will not be wholly destroy'd till the end of the World, and the coming of our Saviour. This, one would think, is sufficiently prov'd from St. *Paul's* words alone, 2 *Thess.* 2. 8. *The Lord shall consume the man of sin,* who is suppos'd the same with Antichrist, *with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming.* He will not then be destroy'd before the coming of our Saviour: and that will not be till the end of the World. For St. *Peter* says, *Act.* 3. 21. *The Heaven must receive him,* speaking of Christ, *until the times of restitution of all things:* that is, the renovation of the World. And if we consider that our Saviour's coming will be in *flames of fire,* as the same Apostle St. *Paul* tells us, 2 *Thess.* 1. 7, 8. 'tis plain that his coming will not be till the Conflagration: in which last flames Antichrist, will be universally destroy'd. This manner of destruction agrees also with the *Apocalypse,* and with *Daniel,* and the Prophets of the old Testament. As to the Apocalypse,

Babylon,

Babylon, the ſeat of Antichriſt, is repreſented there as deſtroy'd by Fire, *chap.* 18. 8, 18. *ch.* 14. 11. *ch.* 19. 3, 20. And in *Daniel*, when the Beaſt is deſtroy'd, *ch.* 7. 11. *His body was given to the burning flame.* Then as to the other Prophets, they do not, you know, ſpeak of Antichriſt or the Beaſt in terms: but under the Types of *Babylon*, *Tyre*, and ſuch like; and theſe places or Princes are repreſented by them as to be deſtroy'd by fire, *Iſa.* 13. 19. *Jer.* 51. 25. *Ezek.* 28. 18.

So much for this third Argument. The fourth Argument is this: The Future Kingdom of Chriſt will not be till the day of Judgment and the Reſurrection. But that will not be till the end of the World. Therefore neither the kingdom of Chriſt. By the day of Judgment here I do not mean the final and univerſal Judgment: Nor by the Reſurrection, the final and univerſal Reſurrection: for theſe will not be till after the Millennium. But we underſtand here the firſt day of Judgment and the firſt Reſurrection, which will be at the end of this preſent World; according as S. *John* does diſtinguiſh them, in the 20*th chap.* of the *Apocalypſe*. Now that the Millennium will not be till the day of Judgment in this ſence, we have both the teſtimonies of *Daniel* and of S. *John*. *Daniel* in the 7*th chap.* ſuppoſes the Beaſt to rule *till judgment ſhall ſit*, and then *they ſhall take away his dominion*, and it ſhall be given to the people of the Saints of the moſt High. S. *John* makes an explicit declaration of both theſe, in his 20*th chap.* of the *Apocalypſe*, which is the great Directory in this point of the Millennium; He ſays there were Thrones ſet, as for a judicature. Then there was a Reſurrection from the Dead: and thoſe that riſe, reigned with Chriſt a Thouſand years. Here's a Judicial Seſſion, a Reſurrection, and the reign of Chriſt joyned together. There is alſo another paſſage in S. *John*, that joyns the judgment of the Dead with the Kingdom of Chriſt. 'Tis in the 11*th chap.* under the ſeventh Trumpet. The words are theſe, *ver.* 15. *And the ſeventh Angel ſounded, and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt: and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.*

ver. 9, &c. *ver.* 26, &c. *ver.* 4.

And

And the four and twenty Elders, &c. *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the Dead, that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldſt give reward unto thy ſervants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy name.* Here are two things plainly expreſs'd and link'd together, *The judging of the Dead*, and the *Kingdom of Chriſt*; wherein the Prophets and Saints are rewarded. Now as the *judging of the Dead* is not in this life, ſo neither is the reward of the Prophets and Saints in this life: as we are taught ſufficiently in the Goſpel and by the Apoſtles, (*Matt.* 19. 28. 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *and ch.* 5. 4.) Therefore the Reign and Kingdom of Chriſt which is joyned with theſe two, cannot be in this life, or before the end of the world. And as a further teſtimony and confirmation of this, we may obſerve that S. *Paul* to *Timothy*, hath joyn'd together theſe three things; The *appearance of Chriſt*, the *Reign of Chriſt*, and the *judging of the Dead. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1.

This might alſo be prov'd from the order, extent, and progreſs, of the Prophecies of the *Apocalypſe*; whereof ſome are ſuch as reach to the end of the World, and yet muſt be accompliſh'd before the Millennium begin: as the Vials. Others are ſo far already advanc'd towards the end of the World, as to leave no room for a thouſand years reign; as the Trumpets. But becauſe every one hath his own interpretation of theſe Prophecies, and it would be tedious here to prove any ſingle Hypotheſis in contradiſtinction to all the reſt, we will therefore leave this remark, to have more or leſs effect, according to the minds it falls upon. And proceed to our fifth Argument.

Fifthly, The *New Jeruſalem*-ſtate is the ſame with the Millennial ſtate: But the *New Jeruſalem* ſtate will not be till the end of the World, or till after the Conflagration: Therefore neither the Millennium. That the *New Jeruſalem*-ſtate is the ſame with the Millennium, is agreed upon, I think, by all Millenaries,

Ancient

Ancient and Modern. *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, and *Tertullian*, speak of it in that sence; and so do the later Authors, so far as I have observ'd. And S. *John* seems to give them good authority for it. In the 20*th chap.* of the *Apocalypse*, he says, the *Camp of the Saints* and *the Beloved City* were besieg'd by Satan and his Gigantick crew at the end of the Millennium. That *Beloved City* is the *New Jerusalem*, and you see it is the same with the Camp of the Saints, or, at least, contemporary with it. Besides, the marriage of the Lamb was in the New Jerusalem, for that was the *Spouse of the Lamb*, *Apoc.* 21. 2. Now this Spouse was ready, and this marriage was said to be come, at the destruction of *Babylon*: which was the beginning of the Millennium, *ch.* 18. 7. Therefore the New Jerusalem run all along with the Millennium, and was indeed the same thing under another name. Lastly, What is this New Jerusalem if it be not the same with the Millennial state? It is promis'd as a reward to the sufferers for Christ, *Apoc.* 3. 12. and you see its wonderful priviledges, *ch.* 21. 3, 4. and yet it is not heaven and eternal Life; for it is said to come down from God out of Heaven, *ch.* 21. 2. *and ch.* 3. 12 It can therefore be nothing but the glorious kingdom of Christ upon Earth, where the Saints shall reign with him a Thousand Years.

Now as to the second part of our Argument, that the New Jerusalem will not come down from Heaven till the end of the World: of this S. *John* seems to give us a plain proof or demonstration; for he places the New Jerusalem in the New Heavens and New Earth, which cannot be till after the Conflagration. Let us hear his words, *Apoc.* 21. 1, 2. *And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven: prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband.* When the New Earth was made, he sees the New Jerusalem coming down upon it; and this renovation of the Earth not being till the Conflagration. The New Jerusalem could not be till then, neither. The Prophet *Isaiah* had long before said the same thing,

though

though not in terms so expres; He first says, *Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, wherein you shall rejoyce.* Then subjoyns immediately, *Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoycing.* This rejoycing is still in the same place; in the New Heavens and New Earth, or in the New Jerusalem. And S. *John* in a like method, first sets down the New Earth, then the New Jerusalem; and expresses the mind of the Prophet *Isaiah* more distinctly. *Isa.* 65. 17, 18.

This leads me to a Sixth Argument to confirm our Conclusion. The time of the *Restitution* or *Restauration of all things*, spoken of by S. *Peter* and the Prophets, is the same with the Millennium: But that Restauration will not be till the coming of Christ, and the end of the World: Therefore neither the Millennium. That this Restitution of all things will not be till the coming of our Saviour, S. *Peter* declares in his Sermon, *Act.* 3. 21. and that the coming of our Saviour will not be till the end of the World, or till the Conflagration, both S. *Paul* and S. *Peter* signifie to us, 1 *Thess.* 1. 7, 8. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. Therefore it remains only to prove, that this Restitution of all things spoken of here by the Apostle, is the same with the Millennium. I know that which it does directly and immediately signifie, is the Renovation of the World: but it must include the Moral World as well as the Natural: otherwise it cannot be truly said, as S. *Peter* does there, that all the Prophets have spoken of it. And what is the Renovation of the Natural and Moral World, but the New Jerusalem or the Millennium.

These Arguments, taken together, have, to me, an irresistible evidence for the proof of our Conclusion: That the Blessed Millennium cannot obtain in the present Earth, or before the Conflagration; But when Nature is renew'd, and the Saints and Martyrs rais'd from the Dead, then they shall reign together with Christ, in the New Heavens and New Earth, or in the New Jerusalem; Satan being bound for a thousand years.

CHAP. IX.

The chief employment of the Millennium, DEVOTION and CONTEMPLATION.

WE have now done with the ſubſtance of our Diſcourſe: which is comprehended in theſe Three Propoſitions:

I. *After the Conflagration of this World, there will be New Heavens and a New Earth: And that Earth will be inhabited.*

II. *That there is an happy Millennial ſtate; Or a future kingdom of Chriſt and his Saints, propheſied of and promis'd in the Old and New Teſtament: and receiv'd by the Primitive Church, as a Chriſtian and Catholick doctrine.*

III. *That this bleſſed Millennial ſtate, according as it is deſcrib'd in Scripture, cannot take place in the preſent Earth, nor under the preſent conſtitution of Nature and Providence: But is to be celebrated in the New Heavens and New Earth, after the Conflagration.*

Theſe three Propoſitions ſupport this Work; and if any of them be broken, I confeſs my deſign is broken, and this Treatiſe is of no effect. But what remains to be ſpoken to in theſe laſt Chapters, is more circumſtantial or modal; and an error or miſtake in ſuch things, does not wound any vital part of the argument. You muſt now therefore lay aſide your ſeverity, and rigorous cenſures; we are very happy, if, in this life, we can attain to the ſubſtance of truth: and make rational conjectures concerning modes and circumſtances; where every one hath a right to offer his

his ſence, with modeſty and ſubmiſſion. Revelations made to us from Heaven in this preſent ſtate, are often incompleat, and do not tell us all: as if it was on purpoſe to ſet our thoughts a work to ſupply the reſt; which we may lawfully do, provided it be according to the analogy of Scripture and Reaſon.

To proceed therefore; We ſuppoſe, as you ſee, the *new Heavens* and the *new Earth* to be the ſeat of the *Millennium:* and that new Creation to be *Paradiſiacal.* Its Inhabitants alſo to be righteous Perſons, the Saints of the moſt High. And ſeeing the ordinary employments of our preſent life, will then be needleſs and ſuperſeded, as Military affairs, Sea-affairs, moſt Trades and Manufactures, Law, Phyſick, and the laborious part of Agriculture: it may be wonder'd, how this happy People, will beſtow their time: what entertainment they will find in a ſtate of ſo much eaſe, and ſo little action. To this one might anſwer in ſhort, by another queſtion, *How* would they have entertain'd themſelves in Paradiſe, if man had continued in Innocency? This is a revolution of the ſame ſtate, and therefore they may paſs their time as well now, as they could have done then. But to anſwer more particularly, beſides all innocent diverſions, ingenuous converſations, and entertainments of friendſhip, the greateſt part of their time will be ſpent in *Devotion* and *Contemplation.* O happy employment, and next to that of Heaven it ſelf. What do the Saints above, but ſing praiſes unto God, and contemplate his Perfections. And how mean and deſpicable, for the moſt part, are the employments of this preſent life, if compar'd with thoſe intellectual actions. If Mankind was divided into ten parts, nine of thoſe ten employ their time to get bread to their belly, and cloaths to their back; And what impertinences are theſe to a reaſonable Soul, if ſhe was free from the clog of a mortal Body; or if that could be provided for, without trouble or loſs of time? Corporeal labour is from need and neceſſity, but intellectual exerciſes are matter of choice, that pleaſe and perfect at the ſame time.

Devotion warms and opens the Soul, and diſpoſes it to receive divine influences. It ſometimes raiſes the

mind into an heavenly ecſtaſie, and fills it with a joy that is not to be expreſt. When it is pure, it leaves a ſtrong impreſſion upon the heart, of Love to God; and inſpires us with a contempt of this World, having taſted the pleaſures of the World to come. In the ſtate which we ſpeak of, ſeeing the *Tabernacle of God will be with men*, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that there will be greater effuſions and irradiations of the Holy Spirit, than we have or can expect in this region of darkneſs: and conſequently, all the ſtrength and comfort that can ariſe from private devotion.

Apoc. 21. 3.

And as to their publick Devotions, all beauties of holineſs, all perfection of divine worſhip, will ſhine in their Aſſemblies. Whatſoever *David* ſays of *Sion* and *Jeruſalem*, are but ſhadows of this new *Jeruſalem*, and of the glory that will be in thoſe Solemnities. Imagine what a Congregation will be there of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Chriſtian Martyrs, and Saints of the firſt rank, throughout all Ages. And theſe all known to one another by their Names and Hiſtory. This very meeting together of ſuch Perſons, muſt needs create a joy unſpeakable: But when they unite in their praiſes to God and to the Lamb, with pure hearts full of divine Love: when they ſing their Halleluiah's to him that ſits upon the Throne, that hath waſh'd them in his blood, and redeem'd them out of every Kingdom, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. When, with their Palms in their hands, they triumph over Sin, and Death, and Hell, and all the Powers of Darkneſs: can there be any thing, on this ſide Heaven, and a Quire of Angels, more glorious or more joyful?

Pſal. 84.
Pſal. 87.

But why did I except Angels? Why may not they be thought to be preſent at theſe Aſſemblies? In a Society of Saints and purified Spirits, Why ſhould we think their converſe impoſſible? In the Golden Age, the gods were always repreſented, as having freer intercourſe with Men; and before the Flood, we may reaſonably believe it ſo. I cannot think, *Enoch* was tranſlated into Heaven without any converſe with its Inhabitants before he went thither. And ſeeing the Angels vouchſaf'd often, in former Ages, to viſit the Patriarchs upon Earth, we may with reaſon judge,

that

that they will much more converse with the same Patriarchs and holy Prophets, now they are risen from the Dead, and cleans'd from their sins, and seated in the new *Jerusalem.* I cannot but call to mind upon this occasion, that representation which St. *Paul* makes to us, of a glorious state and a glorious Assembly, too high for this present Earth: 'Tis *Hebr.* 12. 22, *&c.* in these words. *But you are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels; To the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect.* This, I know, several apply to the Times and state of the Gospel, in opposition to that of the Law; and it is introduc'd in that manner; But here are several expressions too high for any present state of things; They must respect a future state, either of Heaven, or of the Millennial kingdom of Christ. And to the later of these the expressions agree, and have a peculiar fitness and applicability to it. And what follows in the context, *ver.* 26, 27, 28. *about shaking the Heavens and the Earth once more:* Removing the former Scenes, and bringing on a new Kingdom that cannot be shaken: All this, I say, answers to the kingdom of Christ, which is to be establish'd in the new Heavens and new Earth.

But to proceed in their publick Devotions; Suppose this August Assembly, inflam'd with all divine passions, met together to celebrate the name of God; with Angels intermixt, to bear a part in this holy exercise. And let this concourse be, not in any Temple made with hands, but under the great roof of Heaven, (the true Temple of the most High,) so as all the Air may be fill'd with the chearful harmony of their Hymns and Halleluiahs. Then, in the heighth of their devotion, as they sing praises to the Lamb, and to him that sits upon the Throne, suppose the Heavens to open, and the Son of God to appear in his glory, *Apoc.* 5. 11. with Thousands and Ten Thousands of Angels round about him; That their eyes may see him, who, for their sakes, was crucified upon Earth, now encircled with Light and Majesty. This will raise them

them into as great tranſports as humane nature can bear: They will wiſh to be diſſolv'd, they will ſtrive to fly up to him in the clouds, or to breath out their Souls in repeated doxologies of *Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

ch. 5. 13.

But we cannot live always in the flames of Devotion. The weakneſs of our nature will not ſuffer us to continue long under ſuch ſtrong Paſſions, and ſuch intenſeneſs of Mind. The queſtion is therefore, What will be the ordinary employment of that life? How will they entertain their thoughts, or ſpend their time? For we ſuppoſe they will not have that multiplicity of frivolous buſineſs that we have now: About our Bodies, about our Children: in Trades and Mechanicks: in Traffick and Navigation: or Wars by Sea or Land. Theſe things being ſwept away, wholly or in a great meaſure, what will come in their place? how will they find work or entertainment for a long life? If, we conſider, who they are that will have a part in this firſt Reſurrection, and be Inhabitants of that World that is to come, we may eaſily believe that the moſt conſtant employment of their life will be CONTEMPLATION. Not that I exclude any innocent diverſions, as I ſaid before: The entertainments of friendſhip, or ingenuous converſation, but the great buſineſs and deſign of that life is Contemplation: as preparatory to heaven and eternal Glory. *Ut paulatim aſſueſcant capere Deum*, as *Irenæus* ſays: That they may, by degrees, enlarge their capacities, fit and *accuſtom themſelves to receive God.* Or, as he ſays in another place, *That they may become capable of the glory of the Father*, that is, capable of bearing the glory and preſence of God: capable of the higheſt enjoyment of him, which is uſually call'd the *Beatifical Viſion*; and is the condition of the bleſſed in Heaven.

l. 5. c. 32.

It cannot be deny'd, that in ſuch a Millennial ſtate, where we ſhall be freed from all the incumbrances of this life, and provided of better Bodies and greater light of Mind: It cannot be doubted, I ſay, but that we ſhall then be in a diſpoſition to make great proficiency in the knowledge of all things, Divine and Intel-

Intellectual: and consequently of making happy preparations for our entring upon a further state of glory. For there is nothing certainly does more prepare the mind of man for the highest perfections, than Contemplation: with that Devotion which naturally flows from it, as heat follows light. And this Contemplation hath always a greater or less effect upon the mind according to the perfection of its object. So as the Contemplation of the Divine Nature, is, of all others, the most perfective in it self, and to us, according to our capacities and degree of abstraction. An *Immense Being* does strangely fill the Soul: and Omnipotency, Omniscience, and Infinite Goodness, do enlarge and dilate the Spirit, while it fixtly looks upon them. They raise strong passions of Love and Admiration, which melt our Nature, and transform it into the mould and image of that which we contemplate. What the Scripture says of our *Transformation* into the Divine likeness: what S. *John* and the *Platonists* say of our *Union* with God. And whatever is not Cant in the *Mystical Theology*, when they tell us of being Deified: all this must spring from these sources of Devotion and Contemplation. They will change and raise us from perfection to perfection, as from glory to glory: into a greater similitude and nearer station to the Divine Nature.

The Contemplation of God and his Works, comprehends all things. For, the one makes the uncreated World, and the other the Created. And as the divine Essence and Attributes are the greatest object that the mind of man can set before it self; so next to that are the effects and emanations of the Divinity, or the Works of the Divine Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, in the Created World. This hath a vast extent and variety, and would be sufficient to entertain their time, in that happy state, much longer than a thousand years. As you will easily grant, if you allow me but to point at the several heads of those Speculations.

The Contemplation of the *Created World* divides it self into three parts, that of the *Intellectual* World: that of the *Corporeal*: And the Government and Admini-

miniſtration of both, which is uſually call'd *Providence*. Theſe three, drawn into one thought, with the reaſons and proportions that reſult from them, compoſe that *GRAND IDEA*, which is the treaſury and comprehenſion of all Knowledge. Whereof we have ſpoken more largely in the laſt Chapter of the Second Book of this Theory, under the name of the *Mundane Idea*. But at preſent we ſhall only mention ſuch particulars, as may be thought proper ſubjects for the meditations and enquiries of thoſe who ſhall enjoy that happy ſtate which we now treat of.

As to the Intellectual World, excepting our own Souls, we know little, in this region of darkneſs where we are at preſent, more than bare names. We hear of Angels and Archangels, of Cherubins and Seraphins, of Principalities and Powers and Thrones and Dominions. We hear the ſound of theſe words with admiration, but we know little of their natures; wherein their general notion, and wherein their diſtinction, conſiſts: what peculiar excellencies they have, what offices and employments: of all this we are ignorant. Only in general, we cannot but ſuppoſe that there are more orders and degrees of Intellectual Beings, betwixt us and the Almighty, than there are kinds or ſpecies of living Creatures upon the face of the Earth: betwixt Man, their Lord and Maſter, and the leaſt Worm that creeps upon the ground. Nay, than there are Stars in Heaven, or Sands upon the Sea ſhore. For there is an infinite diſtance and interval betwixt us and God Almighty: and all that, is fill'd with created Beings of different degrees of perfection, ſtill approaching nearer and nearer to their Maker. And when this inviſible World ſhall be open'd to us: when the Curtain is drawn, and the Celeſtial Hierarchy ſet in order before our eyes, we ſhall deſpiſe our ſelves, and all the petty glories of a mortal life, as the dirt under our feet.

As to the Corporeal Univerſe, we have ſome ſhare already in the Contemplation and knowledge of that: tho' little in compariſon of what will be then diſcover'd. The doctrine of the Heavens, fix'd Stars, Planets

and

and Comets, both as to their matter, motion and form, will be then clearly demonstrated: and what are mysteries to us now, will become matter of ordinary conversation. We shall be better acquainted with our neighbouring Worlds, and make new discoveries as to the state of their affairs. The Sun especially, the Great Monarch of the Planetary Worlds: whose dominion reaches from Pole to Pole, and the greatness of his kingdom is under the whole heaven. Who sends his bright messengers every day through all the regions of his vast Empire: throwing his beams of light round about him, swifter and further than a thought can follow. This noble Creature, I say, will make a good part of their study in the succeeding World. *Eudoxus* the Philosopher, wish'd he might die like *Phaeton*, in approaching too near to the Sun; provided he could fly so near it, and endure it so long, till he had discover'd its beauty and perfection. Who can blame his curiosity: who would not venture far to see the Court of so great a Prince: who hath more Worlds under his command than the Emperors of the Earth have Provinces or Principalities. Neither does he make his Subjects slaves to his pleasure, or tributaries to serve and supply his wants; on the contrary, They live upon him, he nourishes and preserves them: gives them fruits every year, corn, and wine, and all the comforts of life. This glorious Body, which now we can only gaze upon and admire, will be then better understood. A mass of Light and Flame, and Ethereal matter, ten thousand times bigger than this Earth: Enlightning and enlivening an Orb that exceeds the bulk of our Globe, as much as that does the least sand upon the Sea shore, may reasonably be presum'd to have some great Being at the Centre of it. But what that is, we must leave to the enquiries of another life.

The *Theory of the Earth* will be a common lesson there: carried through all its vicissitudes and periods from first to last, till its entire revolution be accomplish'd. I told you in the Preface, The *Revolution of Worlds* was one of the greatest Speculations that we are capable of in this life: and this little World where

we are, will be the first and easiest instance of it; seeing we have Records, Historical or Prophetical, that reach from the Chaos to the end of the new Heavens and new Earth: which course of time makes up the greatest part of the Circle or Revolution. And as what was before the Chaos, was but the first remove from a Fixt Star, so what is after the thousand years Renovation, is but the last step to it again.

The *Theory of humane Nature* is also an useful and necessary speculation, and will be carried on to perfection in that state. Having fixt the true distinction betwixt Matter and Spirit, betwixt the Soul and the Body, and the true nature and laws of their union: The original contract, and the terms ratified by Providence at their first conjunction: It will not be hard to discover the springs of action and passion: how the thoughts of our mind, and the motions of our body act in dependance one upon another. What are the primary differences of Genius's and complexions, and how our Intellectuals or Morals depend upon them. What is the Root of Fatality, and how far it extends. By these lights, they will see into their own and every Man's breast, and trace the foot-steps of the divine wisdom in that strange composition of Soul and Body.

This indeed is a mixt speculation, as most others are: and takes in something of both Worlds, Intellectual and Corporeal: and may also belong in part to the Third Head we mention'd, *Providence*. But there is no need of distinguishing these Heads so nicely, provided we take in, under some or other of them, what may be thought best to deserve our knowledge, now, or in another World. As to *Providence*, what we intend chiefly by it here, is the general œconomy of our Religion, and what is reveal'd to us in Scripture, concerning God, Angels, and Mankind. These Revelations, as most in Sacred Writ, are short and incompleat: as being design'd for practice more than for speculation, or to awaken and excite our thoughts, rather than to satisfie them. Accordingly we read in Scripture of a Triune Deity: of God made flesh, in the Womb of a Virgin: Barbarously crucified by the

Jews:

Jews: Descending into Hell: rising again from the Dead: visibly ascending into Heaven: And sitting at the right hand of God the Father, above Angels and Arch-Angels. These great things are imperfectly reveal'd to us in this life; which we are to believe so far as they are reveal'd: In hopes these mysteries will be made more intelligible, in that happy state to come, where Prophets, Apostles, and Angels, will meet in conversation together.

In like manner, how little is it we understand concerning the *Holy Ghost*. That he descended like a *Dove* upon our Saviour: Like cloven Tongues of fire upon the Apostles; The Place being fill'd with a rushing mighty Wind: That he over-shadowed the Blessed Virgin, and begot the Holy Infant. That He made the Apostles speak all sort of Tongues and Languages *ex tempore*, and pour'd out strange Vertues and miraculous Gifts upon the Primitive Christians. These things we know as bare matter of fact, but the method of these operations we do not at all understand. Who can tell us now, what that is which we call *INSPIRATION*? What change is wrought in the Brain, and what in the Soul: and how the effect follows? Who will give us the just definition of a *Miracle?* What the proximate Agent is above Man, and whether they are all from the same power? How the manner and process of those miraculous changes in matter, may be conceiv'd? These things we see darkly, and hope they will be set in a clearer light, and the Doctrines of our Religion more fully expounded to us, in that Future World. For as several things obscurely expreſt in the Old Testament, are more clearly reveal'd in the New; So the same mysteries, in a succeeding state, may still receive a further explication.

Mat. 3. 16. *Act.* 2. *Matt.* 1. 18. *Luke* 1. 35.

The History of the Angels, Good or bad, makes another part of this Providential Systeme. Christian Religion gives us some notices, of both kinds, but very imperfect; What interest the Good Angels have in the government of the World, and in ordering the affairs of this Earth and Mankind: What subjection they have to our Saviour, and what part in his Mini-

ſtery: Whether they are Guardians to particular Perſons, to Kingdoms, to Empires: All that we know at preſent, concerning theſe things, is but conjectural. And as to the bad Angels, who will give us an account of their fall, and of their former condition? I had rather know the hiſtory of *Lucifer*, than of all the *Babylonian* and *Perſian* Kings; Nay, than of all the Kings of the Earth. What the Birthright was of that mighty Prince: what his Dominions: where his Imperial Court and Reſidence? How he was depos'd: for what Crime, and by what Power? How he ſtill wages War againſt Heaven, in his exile: What Confederates he hath: What is his Power over Mankind, and how limited? What change or damage he ſuffer'd by the coming of Chriſt, and how it alter'd the poſture of his affairs. Where he will be impriſon'd in the *Millennium:* and what will be his laſt fate and final doom: whether he may ever hope for a Revolution or Reſtauration? Theſe things lie hid in the ſecret Records of Providence, which then, I hope, will be open'd to us.

With the Revolution of *Worlds*, we mention'd before the Revolution of *Souls*; which is another great Circle of Providence, to be ſtudied hereafter. We know little here, either of the pre-exiſtence or poſt-exiſtence of our Souls. We know not what they will be, till the loud Trump awakes us, and calls us again into the Corporeal World. Who knows how many turns he ſhall take upon this ſtage of the Earth, and how many trials he ſhall have, before his doom will be finally concluded. Who knows where, or what, is the ſtate of Hell: where the Souls of the wicked are ſaid to be to Eternity. What is the true ſtate of Heaven: what our Celeſtial Bodies: and what that ſovereign happineſs that is call'd the *Beatifical Viſion?* Our knowledge and conceptions of theſe things, are, at preſent, very general and ſuperficial; But in the future kingdom of Chriſt, which is introductory to Heaven it ſelf, theſe imperfections, in a great meaſure, will be done away; and ſuch preparations wrought, both in the will and underſtanding, as may fit us for the life of Angels, and the enjoyment of God in Eternal Glory.

Thus

Thus you see in general, what will be the employment of the Saints in the blessed *Millennium.* And tho' they have few of the trifling businesses of this life, they will not want the best and noblest of diversions. 'Tis an happy thing when a Man's pleasure is also his perfection: for most Men's pleasures are such as debase their nature. We commonly gratifie our lower faculties, our passions, and our appetites: and these do not improve, but depress the mind. And besides, they are so gross, that the finest tempers are surfeited in a little time. There is no lasting pleasure, but *Contemplation.* All others grow flat and insipid upon frequent use; And when a Man hath run thorough a Sett of Vanities, in the declension of his Age, he knows not what to do with himself, if he cannot Think. He saunters about, from one dull busines to another, to wear out time: And hath no reason to value life, but because he's afraid of death. But Contemplation is a continual spring of fresh pleasures. Truth is inexhausted, and when you are once in the right way, the further you go, the greater discoveries you make, and with the greater joy. We are sometimes highly pleas'd, and even transported, with little inventions in Mathematicks, or Mechanicks, or natural Philosophy; All these things will make part of their diversion and entertainment in that state; All the doctrine of sounds and harmony: Of light, colours, and perspective, will be known in perfection. But these I call Diversions, in comparison of their higher and more serious speculations, which will be the business and happiness of that life.

Do but imagine, that they will have the Scheme of all humane affairs lying before them: from the Chaos to the last period. The universal history and order of times. The whole œconomy of the Christian Religion, and of all Religions in the World. The Plan of the undertaking of the Messiah: with all other parts and ingredients of the Providence of this Earth. Do but imagine this, I say, and you will easily allow, that when they contemplate the beauty, wisdom, and goodness, of the whole design, it must needs raise great and noble passions; and a far richer joy than either

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the pleaſures or ſpeculations of this life can excite in us. And this being the laſt Act and cloſe of all humane affairs, it ought to be the more exquiſite and elaborate: that it may crown the work, ſatisfie the Spectators, and end in a general applauſe. The whole Theater reſounding with the praiſes of the great Dramatiſt, and the wonderful art and order of the compoſition.

CHAP. X.

Objections againſt the Millennium, anſwer'd. With ſome Conjectures concerning the ſtate of things after the Millennium: and what will be the final Conſummation of this World.

YOU ſee how Nature and Providence have conſpir'd, to make the *Millennium* as happy a ſtate, as any Terreſtrial ſtate can be. For, beſides health and Plenty: Peace, Truth, and Righteouſneſs will flouriſh there, and all the evils of this life ſtand excluded. There will be no ambitious Princes, ſtudying miſchief one againſt another; or contriving methods to bring their own Subjects into ſlavery. No mercenary Stateſmen, to aſſiſt and intrigue with them. No oppreſſion from the powerful, no ſnares or traps laid for the innocent. No treacherous friends, no malicious Enemies. No knaves, cheats, hypocrites; the Vermin of this Earth, that ſwarm every where. There will be nothing but truth, candor, ſincerity, and ingenuity: as in a Society or Commonwealth of Saints and Philoſophers. In a word, 'twill be *Paradiſe Reſtor'd*: both as to innocency of temper, and the beauties of Nature.

I believe you will be apt to ſay, If this be not true, 'tis pity but that it ſhould be true. For 'tis a very deſirable ſtate, where all good People would find themſelves

ſelves mightily at eaſe. What is it that hinders it then? It muſt be ſome ill *Genius*. For Nature tends to ſuch a Renovation, as we ſuppoſe: and Scripture ſpeaks loudly of an happy ſtate to be, ſome time or other, on this ſide Heaven. And what is there, pray, in this preſent World, natural or moral, if I may ask with reverence, that could make it worth the while for God to create it, if it never was better, nor ever will be better? Is there not more miſery than happineſs: Is there not more vice than virtue, in this World? as if it had been made by a *Manichean* God. The Earth barren, the Heavens inconſtant: Men wicked, and God offended. This is the poſture of our affairs: ſuch hath our World been hitherto: with wars and bloudſhed, ſickneſs and diſeaſes, poverty, ſervitude and perpetual drudgery for the neceſſaries of a mortal life. We may therefore reaſonably hope, from a God infinitely good and powerful, for better times and a better ſtate, before the laſt period and conſummation of all things.

But it will be objected, it may be, that, according to Scripture, the vices and wickedneſs of men will continue to the end of the World; and ſo there will be no room for ſuch an happy ſtate, as we hope for. Our Saviour ſays, *When the ſon of man cometh, ſhall he find faith upon the Earth?* They ſhall *eat and drink and play*, as before the deſtruction of the *old World*, or of *Sodom*, (*Luk.* 17. 26, *&c.*) and the wickedneſs of thoſe men, you know, continued to the laſt. This objection may pinch thoſe that ſuppoſe the Millennium to be in the preſent Earth, and a thouſand years before the coming of our Saviour: for his words ſeem to imply that the World will be in a ſtate of wickedneſs even till his coming. Accordingly Antichriſt or the *Man of Sin*, is not ſaid to be deſtroy'd till the coming of our Saviour. 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 8. and till he be deſtroy'd, we cannot hope for a Millennium. Laſtly, the Coming of our Saviour is always repreſented in Scripture as ſudden, ſurpriſing and unexpected. As *Lightning* breaking ſuddenly out of the clouds, (*Luk.* 17. 24. and *ch.* 21. 34, 35.) or as a *thief in the night*, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2, 3, 4. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *Apoc.* 16. 15. But if *Luk.* 18. 8.

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there be such a forerunner of it as the Millennial state, whose bounds we know, according as that expires and draws to an end, men will be certainly advertis'd of the approaching of our Saviour. But this objection, as I told you, does not affect our hypothesis, for we suppose the Millennium will not be till after the coming of our Saviour, and the Conflagration. And also that his coming will be sudden and surprising: and that Antichrist will continue in being, tho' not in the same degree of power, till that time. So that they that place the Millennium in the present Earth, are chiefly concern'd to answer this first objection.

But you will object, it may be, in the second place, That this Millennium, whereſoever it is, would degenerate, at length, into sensuality, and a Mahometan Paradise. For where there are earthly pleasures and earthly appetites, they will not be kept always in order, without any excess or luxuriancy: especially as to the senses of touch and taste. I am apt to think this is true, if the Soul have no more power over the body than she hath at present: and our senses, passions, and appetites be as strong as they are now. But according to our explication of the Millennium, we have great reason to hope, that the Soul will have a greater dominion over the Resurrection-body, than she hath over this. And you know we suppose that none will truly inherit the Millennium, but those that rise from the Dead. Nor do we admit any propagation there, nor the trouble or weakness of Infants. But that all rise in a perfect age, and never die: being transslated, at the final judgment, to meet our Saviour in the clouds, and to be with him for ever. Thus we easily avoid the force of this objection. But those that place the Millennium in this life, and to be enjoy'd in these Bodies, must find out some new preservatives against vice: otherwise they will be continually subject to degeneracy.

Another objection may be taken from the personal Reign of Christ upon Earth: which is a thing incongruous, and yet asserted by many modern Millenaries. That Christ should leave that right hand of

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his Father, to come and pass a thousand years here below: living upon Earth in an heavenly Body: This, I confess, is a thing I never could digest, and therefore I am not concern'd in this objection; not thinking it necessary that Christ should be personally present and resident upon Earth in the Millennium. I am apt to believe that there will be then a celestial presence of Christ, if I may so call it; as the Sun is present to the Earth, yet never leaves its place in the Firmament; so Christ may be visibly conspicuous in his heavenly Throne, as he was to S. *Steven*: and yet never leave the right hand of his Father. And this would be a more glorious and illustrious presence, than if he should descend, and converse amongst men in a personal shape. But these things not being distinctly reveal'd to us, we ought not to determine any thing concerning them, but with modesty and submission. *Act.* 7. 55, 56.

We have thus far pretty well escap'd, and kept our selves out of the reach of the ordinary objections against the Millennium. But there remains one, concerning a *double Resurrection*, which must fall upon every Hypothesis: and 'tis this. The Scripture, they say, speaks but of one Resurrection: whereas the doctrine of the Millennium supposes two; one at the beginning of the Millennium, for the Martyrs, and those that enjoy that happy state, and the other at the end of it; which is universal and final, in the last day of judgment. 'Tis true, Scripture generally speaks of the Resurrection in gross: without distinguishing first and second; and so it speaks of the *Coming* of our Saviour, without distinction of first or second; yet it does not follow from that, that there is but one coming of our Saviour: so neither that there is but one Resurrection. And seeing there is one place of Scripture that speaks expresly and distinctly of two Resurrections, namely the 20*th chap.* of the *Apocalypse*: that is to us a sufficient warrant for asserting two. As there are some things in one Evangelist that are not in another, yet we think them authentick if they be but in one. There are also some things in *Daniel*, concerning the *Messiah*, and concerning the *Resurrection*, that are not in the rest of the Prophets: yet we look upon

his ſingle teſtimony, as good authority. S. *John* writ the laſt of all the Apoſtles: and as the whole ſeries of his Prophecies is new, reaching through the later times to the Conſummation of all things; ſo we cannot wonder if he had ſomething more particular reveal'd to him concerning the Reſurrection; that which was ſpoken of before in general, being diſtinguiſh'd now into *Firſt* and *Second*, or particular and univerſal, in this laſt Prophet. Some think S. *Paul* means no leſs, when he makes an *order* in the Reſurrection: ſome riſing ſooner, ſome later: 1 *Cor.* 15. 23, 24. 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 14, 15, *&c.* but whether that be ſo or no, S. *John* might have a more diſtinct revelation concerning it, than S. *Paul* had, or any one before him.

See Mr. Mede.

After theſe Objections, a great many Quæries and difficulties might be propos'd relating to the Millennium. But that's no more than what is found in all other matters, remote from our knowledge. Who can anſwer all the Quæries that may be made concerning *Heaven*, or *Hell*, or *Paradiſe*? When we know a thing as to the ſubſtance, we are not to let go our hold, tho' there remain ſome difficulties unreſolv'd; otherwiſe we ſhould be eternally Sceptical in moſt matters of knowledge. Therefore, tho' we cannot, for example, give a full account of the diſtinction of habitations and inhabitants in the *Future Earth*: or, of the order of the *firſt Reſurrection*; whether it be performed by degrees and ſucceſſively, or all the Inhabitants of the New Jeruſalem riſe at once, and continue throughout the whole Millennium. I ſay, tho' we cannot give a diſtinct account of theſe, or ſuch like particulars, we ought not therefore to deny or doubt whether there will be a *New Earth*, or a *Firſt Reſurrection*. For the Revelation goes clearly ſo far: and the obſcurity is only in the conſequences and dependances of it. Which Providence thought fit, without further light, to leave to our ſearch and diſquiſition.

Scripture mentions one thing, at the end of the Millennium, which is a common difficulty to all; and every one muſt contribute their beſt thoughts and conjectures towards the ſolution of it. 'Tis the ſtrange

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doctrine of *Gog* and *Magog*; which are to riſe up in rebellion againſt the Saints, and beſiege the holy City, and the holy Camp. And this is to be upon the expiration of the thouſand years, when Satan is looſen'd. For no ſooner will his Chains be knock'd off, but he will put himſelf in the head of this Army of Gyants, or Sons of the Earth, and attack Heaven, and the Saints of the moſt High. But with ill ſucceſs, for there will come down fire and lightning from Heaven, and conſume them. This, methinks, hath a great affinity with the hiſtory of the Gyants, rebelling and aſſaulting Heaven, and ſtruck down by thunder-bolts. But that of ſetting mountains upon mountains, or toſſing them into the Skie, that's the Poetical part, and we muſt not expect to find it in the Prophecy. The Poets told their fable, as of a thing paſt, and ſo it was a fable; But the Prophets ſpeak of it, as of a thing to come, and ſo it will be a reality. But how and in what ſence it is to be underſtood and explain'd, every one has the liberty to make the beſt judgment he can. *Apoc.* 20. 8, 9.

Ezekiel mentions *Gog* and *Magog*: which I take to be onely types and ſhadows of theſe which we are now ſpeaking of: and not yet exemplified, no more than his Temple. And ſeeing this People is to be at the end of the *Millennium*, and in the ſame Earth with it, We muſt, according to our Hypotheſis, plant them in the Future Earth; and therefore all former conjectures about the *Turks*, or *Scythians*, or other *Barbarians*, are out of doors with us, ſeeing the Scene of this action does not lie in the preſent Earth. They are alſo repreſented by the Prophet, as a People diſtinct and ſeparate from the Saints, not in their manners onely, but alſo in their ſeats and habitations; For they are ſaid to come up from the four corners of the Earth, upon the breadth of the Earth: and there to beſiege the *Camp of the Saints and the beloved City*: This makes it ſeem probable to me, that there will be a double race of Mankind in that *Future Earth*: very different one from another, both as to their temper and diſpoſition, and as to their origine. The one born from Heaven, Sons of God, and of the Reſurrection: who are the true Saints and heirs of the *Millennium*. The *ch.* 38. & 39. *Apoc.* 20. 8, 9.

others born of the Earth, Sons of the Earth, generated from the ſlime of the ground, and the heat of the Sun, as brute Creatures were at firſt. This ſecond Progeny or Generation of Men in the Future Earth, I underſtand to be ſignified by the Prophet under theſe borrowed or feigned names of *Gog* and *Magog*. And this Earth-born race, encreaſing and multiplying after the manner of Men, by carnal propagation, after a thouſand years, grew numerous, as the Sand by the Sea; and thereupon made an irruption or inundation upon the face of the Earth, and upon the habitations of the Saints; As the barbarous Nations did formerly upon Chriſtendom: Or as the Gyants are ſaid to have made War againſt the Gods. But they were ſoon confounded in their impious and ſacrilegious deſign, being ſtruck and conſum'd by fire from Heaven.

Some will think, it may be, that there was ſuch a double race of Mankind in the firſt World alſo. *The Sons of Adam, and the Sons of God:* becauſe it is ſaid, Gen. 6. *When men began to multiply upon the face of the Earth,* that *the SONS OF GOD SAW THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN, that they were fair, and they took them Wives of all that they lik'd.* And it is added preſently, *ver.* 4. *There were Gyants in the Earth in thoſe days; and alſo after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the ſame became mighty men, which were of old men of renown.* Here ſeem to be two or three orders or races in this Ante-diluvian World. *The Sons of God: The Sons and Daughters of Adam*: and a third ſort ariſing from the mixture and copulation of theſe, which are call'd *Mighty men of old,* or Hero's. Beſides, here are Gyants mention'd, and to which they are to be reduc'd, it does not certainly appear.

This mixture of theſe two Races, whatſoever they were, gave, it ſeems, ſo great offence to God, that he deſtroy'd that World upon it, in a Deluge of Water. It hath been matter of great difficulty to determine, who theſe *Sons of God* were, that fell in love with and married the daughters of men. There are two conjectures that prevail moſt: One, that they were Angels: and another, that they were of the Poſterity of *Seth,*

Seth, and distinguish'd from the rest, by their Piety, and the worship of the true God: so that it was a great crime for them to mingle with the rest of mankind, who are suppos'd to have been Idolaters. Neither of these opinions is to me satisfactory. For as to Angels; Good Angels neither *marry, nor are given in marriage*; *Matt.* 22. 30. and bad Angels are not call'd the *Sons of God*. Besides, if Angels were capable of those mean pleasures, we ought in reason to suppose, that there are female Angels, as well as male; for surely those capacities are not in vain through a whole *Species* of Beings. And if there be female Angels, we cannot imagine, but that they must be of a far more charming beauty than the dowdy daughters of men. Then as to the line of *Seth*, It does not appear that there was any such distinction of Idolaters and true Worshippers before the Flood, or that there was any such thing, as Idolatry, at that time: nor for some Ages after. Besides, it is not said that the Sons of God fell in love with the Daughters of *Cain*, or of any degenerate race, but with the Daughters of *Adam*: which may be the Daughters of *Seth*, as well as of any other. These conjectures therefore seem to be shallow and ill grounded. But what the distinction was of those two orders, remains yet very uncertain.

St. *Paul* to the *Galatians*, (*chap.* 4. 21, 22, *&c.*) makes a distinction also of a double Progeny: that of *Sarah*, and that of *Hagar*. One was born according to the flesh, after a natural manner: and the other by the divine power, or in vertue of the divine promise. This distinction of a natural and supernatural origine, and of a double progeny: the one born to servitude, the other to liberty: represents very well either the manner of our present birth, and of our future, at the Resurrection: Or that double progeny and double manner of birth, which we suppose in the *Future Earth*. 'Tis true, St. *Paul* applies this to the Law and the Gospel; but Typical things, you know, have different aspects and completions: which are not exclusive of one another: and so it may be here. But however this double race of Mankind in the Future Earth, to explain the doctrine of *Gog* and *Magog*, is

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but a conjecture: and does not pretend to be otherwise consider'd.

The last thing that remains to be consider'd and accounted for, is the upshot and conclusion of all: namely, what will become of the Earth after the thousand years expir'd? Or after the Day of Judgment past, and the Saints translated into Heaven, what will be the face of things here below? There being nothing expresly reveal'd concerning this, we must not expect a positive resolution of it. And the difficulty is not peculiar to our hypothesis: for though the *Millennium*, and the final Judgment were concluded in the present Earth, the Quære would still remain, *What* would become of this Earth after the Last Day. So that all parties are equally concern'd, and equally free, to give their opinion, *What* will be the *last state and Consummation* of this Earth. Scripture, I told you, hath not defin'd this point: and the Philosophers say very little concerning it. The Stoicks indeed speak of the final resolution of all things into *Fire*, or into *Æther*: which is the purest and subtlest sort of fire. So that the whole Globe or Mass of the Earth, and all particular bodies, will, according to them, be at last dissolv'd into a liquid flame. Neither was this doctrine first invented by the Stoicks: *Heraclitus* taught it long before them: and I take it to be as ancient as *Orpheus* himself: who was the first Philosopher amongst the *Greeks*. And he deriving his notions from the *Barbarick* Philosophers, or the Sages of the East, that School of wisdom may be look'd upon as the true seminary of this doctrine: as it was of most other natural knowledge.

But this dissolution of the Earth into Fire, may be understood two ways; either that it will be dissolv'd into a loose flame, and so dissipated and lost as Lightning in the Air, and vanish into nothing; or that it will be dissolv'd into a fixt flame, such as the Sun is, or a fixt Star. And I am of opinion, that the Earth after the last Day of Judgment, will be chang'd into the nature of a Sun, or of a fixt Star: and shine like them in the Firmament. Being all melted down into a mass of Æthereal matter, and enlightning a Sphere

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or Orb round about it. I have no direct and demonstrative proof of this, I confess; But if Planets were once fixt Stars, as I believe they were; their revolution to the same state again, in a great circle of Time, seems to be according to the methods of Providence; which loves to recover what was lost or decay'd, after certain periods: and what was originally good and happy, to make it so again; All Nature, at last, being transform'd into a like glory with the Sons of God. *Rom.* 8. 21.

I will not tell you what foundation there is in Nature, for this change or transformation; from the interiour constitution of the Earth, and the instances we have seen of new Stars appearing in the Heavens. I should lead the English Reader too far out of his way, to discourse of these things. But if there be any passages or expressions in Scripture, that countenance such a state of things after the day of judgment, it will not be improper to take notice of them. That radiant and illustrious *Jerusalem*, describ'd by S. *John Apoc.* 21. *ver.* 10, 11, 12, *&c.* compos'd all of Gemms and bright materials, clear and sparkling, as a Star in the Firmament: Who can give an account what that is? Its foundations, walls, gates, streets, all the Body of it, resplendent as light or fire. What is there in Nature, or in this Universe, that bears any resemblance with such a Phænomenon as this, unless it be a Sun or a fixt Star? Especially if we add and consider what follows, That *the City had no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon, to shine in it.* And that *there was no night there.* This can be no Terrestrial Body; it must be a substance luminous in it self, and a fountain of light, as a fixt Star. And upon such a change of the Earth, or transformation, as this, would *be brought to pass the saying that is written, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.* Which indeed S. *Paul* seems to apply to our Bodies in particular, 1 *Cor.* 15. 54. But in the Eighth Chap. to the *Romans* He extends it to all Nature. *The Creation it self also shall be deliver'd from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God.* And accordingly S. *John*, speaking of the same time with S. *Paul* in that place to the *ver.* 23. *ver.* 25. *ver.* 21.

the *Corinthians*, namely of the general Reſurrection and day of Judgment, ſays, *Death* and *Hades*, which
*Apoc.*20.14. we render Hell, *were caſt into the lake of fire.* This is their being *ſwallowed up in victory*, which S. *Paul* ſpeaks of; when Death and Hades, that is, all the Region of mortality: The Earth and all its dependances: are obſorpt into a maſs of Fire; and converted, by a glorious Victory over the powers of darkneſs, into a Luminous Body and a region of Light.

This great Iſſue and Period of the Earth, and of all humane affairs, tho' it ſeem to be founded in nature, and ſupported by ſeveral expreſſions of Scripture; yet we cannot, for want of full inſtruction, propoſe it otherwiſe than as a fair Conjecture. The Heavens and the Earth ſhall flie away at the day of Judgment, ſays the Text: *Apoc.* 20. 11. *And their place ſhall not be found.* This muſt be underſtood of our Heavens and our Earth. And their *flying away* muſt be their removing to ſome other part of the Univerſe; ſo as their place or reſidence ſhall not be found any more here below. This is the eaſie and natural ſence of the Words; and this tranſlation of the Earth will not be without ſome change preceding, that makes it leave its place, and, with a lofty flight, take its ſeat amongſt the Stars. ------- There we leave it; Having conducted, it for the ſpace of Seven Thouſand Years, through various changes, from a *dark Chaos to a bright Star.*

FINIS.